

# THE SEWANEE REVIEW

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VOL. XXI ]

OCTOBER, 1913

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[ No. 4

## THE USE OF PROPHECY IN THE IRISH TALES OF THE HEROIC CYCLE

In the sagas and stories of ancient Ireland there are many examples and many varieties of prophecy. These predictions are not, of course, a feature peculiar to old-Irish narration: early literatures are prone to employ divination as a means of preparing or stimulating the reader (or more literally, the hearer). But in the Irish tales of the first years of our era, there is a use of prophecy that is notably individual; for it refuses to 'match' the use of prophecy in the tales of ancient Greece, or of Scandinavia, or in early Jewish writings. Moreover, it is not amenable to organization. The spirit of old-Irish prophecy evidences no respect of persons or places or occasions: it merely happens.

In attempting to show the inconsequent, unorthodox nature of old-Irish prophecy, I have considered, first, those who reveal the future; next, the circumstances under which they prophesy; and then, the subject-matter of their predictions. Finally, I have tried to 'place' prophecy in the stories of the Heroic Cycle.<sup>1</sup>

In the Greek writings, the ability to reveal lies with an organized priesthood established in particular places; in the Norse myths and sagas this privilege belongs primarily to supernatural

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<sup>1</sup> Good translations may be found in D'Arbois, *Cours de littérature celtique*, V; *Irish Texts* II, III; *Revue Celtique*, XIII, XXI, XXIV, XXVIII; *Silva Gadelica*; Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*.

beings; in Hebrew literature a recognized prophet declares the will—more usually, the wrath—of Jehovah. In the early Irish narratives the future is shown by normal human beings as well as by druids (who, too, are but mortal), and by the folk of the fairy world.

One might reasonably expect to find druids monopolizing the prophesying power, for their position was one of great dignity. Even Conchobar, high king of Ireland, must wait until his druid, Cathbad, has spoken. The druids were professors, physicians, priests, magicians, warriors. A rigid course of training made a druid learned, expert in writing *ogam*,<sup>3</sup> proficient in healing, and so skilful in magic that, says D'Arbois, "il put triompher de la puissance des dieux." And besides practising these sciences and arts, the druid prophesied,—but prophesied by parenthesis, as it were. He exercised this gift voluntarily or upon request, yet in neither instance often enough to justify anyone in looking upon him as the authoritative source of revelation. Of sixty-nine examples (taken from thirty-five stories) only eight have a druid as their author, and two of these prophecies are more properly interpretations. Mortals are responsible for twenty-nine prophecies, supernatural beings for twenty-five, and portents for fifteen. Not once is the prophecy made by one who is a prophet *per se*.

The circumstances under which the predictions are made vary with their source. In the Cuchulainn saga and allied tales, the druids reveal simply—when they reveal at all—with no use of the *Imlas Forosnai*, the *Temin Laegda*, and the *Dichetal do chemail*, which D'Arbois mentions as in common use among the Celtic druids. And only once, in *Baile an Scaile*, is a "druid mound" suggested as a desirable aid to prophecy; on that occasion, too, the druid seems to have resorted to cloud divination. He must have been a mere apprentice and as inefficient as the druids of Conn-of-the-hundred-battles. They worked fifty-three days to find out the meaning of the shrieks from the stone,

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<sup>3</sup> *Ogam* was somewhat similar to the Norse runes, but it has greater supernatural power. Inscribed on yew wood, *ogam* could compel events and explain mysteries.

the *Lia Fail*, on which Conn had stood, and then they had to refer the king to a supernatural being for real information. *Ogam*, of course, had a great magic power but does not seem to have been of use in seeing into the future. In *The Wooing of Etain* the heroine's whereabouts are discovered through *ogam*, but not her destiny.

But while all the mortal prophets are devoid of interesting accessories, the supernatural beings show more appreciation of dramatic effect. There may be something of pomp and there is often much minutia of circumstance when an Other-world prophet declares the future. The Morrigu,<sup>3</sup> in particular, appears always with metaphorical music and white light. In the *Tain bó Regamna* she sits clothed in red, on a red wagon drawn by red horses and followed by a red cow. Irritated by her non-committal and disrespectful answers to his questions, Cuchulainn leaps threateningly on the wagon, and she and her equipment disappear. A moment later it is in the form of a bird that she warns him that his life will be short. The Morrigu adds that in his fiercest fight she will, in the shape of an eel, a gray wolf, a heifer, seek to handicap him. The next time she prophesies to Cuchulainn is during the Great *Tain*,<sup>4</sup> and on this occasion she is equally heedful of stage effect. She reveals herself to him as, in D'Arbois's translation, "une jeune femme dont les vêtements étaient de toutes couleurs et qui avait des formes distinguées", and she assures the hero that she loves him for his reputation (a romantic 'effect' that is popular in old-Irish stories), and that she has brought him her cattle and all her treasures. But Cuchulainn disapproves her boldness, and when again she warns him that she will as an eel, etc., give aid to his enemy, he again disbelieves her prophecy.

The prophesying of war and evil is the special responsibility of the Badb—a name that covers not only the Badb proper, the Morrigu, but her sisters Neman and Macha. Before battle they are always to be found darting above the host and uttering

<sup>3</sup> The most famous of the goddesses of war.

<sup>4</sup> The *Tain bó Cualgne* is called the Great *Tain* because of the length and completeness of the narrative. There are fourteen lesser *Tains*.

harsh cries that presage horror and carnage. (The Valkyries have, of course, a somewhat analogous function.) Or when the fighting is over, the Badb may prophesy as she does at the end of *The Second Battle of Moytura*:—

"I shall not see a world that will be dear to me,  
Summer without flowers. . . . An evil time!  
Son will deceive his father,  
Daughter will deceive her mother."

Much more pleasing is Fidelm, Mebd's propheticess, who appears suddenly on the shafts of the queen's chariot. She chants of Cuchulainn and the slaughter he shall make: "I see on your warriors a scarlet stain, I see red!" and Fidelm is worth looking at as she gives her warning. "A spot-pied cloak of green [the color, of course, is a sign of *Sid* extraction] enveloped her. . . . She had a high-colored, rich-blooded face; a blue and laughing eye; lips red and thin; glistening, pearly teeth which indeed you might have taken for a shower of pearls fallen and packed in her head; . . . whiter than snow shed during a single night was the lustre of her skin and flesh, filtered through and past her raiment; . . . fair yellow, gold-glittering hair, three tresses wound around her head, while another fell downward and cast its shadow below her knee." It is a typical old-Irish description. And in *Da Choca's Hostel* the woman who tells Cormac "the ruin of thy life has come", possesses so many charms that he probably felt there may be mitigating circumstances even on the verge of certain disaster.

But those Other-world prophets can be less alluring in appearance. To Da Derga's Hostel comes a woman: "as long as a weaver's beam was each of her two shins, and they were as dark as the back of a stag beetle. A freying woolly mantle she wore. . . . Her lips were on the side of her head." And it is a loathly damsel indeed who assures Niall that he shall be king of Tara; though, fortunately (as in Sir Gawain's experience), she is transformed shortly afterward into a surprisingly beautiful creature.

There is a use of stage properties, also, in the appearance of the Three Red Men of the *Sid* Mound: "three red frocks had they and three red mantles; three red bucklers they bore, and



three red spears were in their hands; three red steeds they bestrode, and three red heads of hair were on them." These men "alive and not alive", ride past Conaire—a thing *geis* (taboo) to him—prophesying the destruction of Da Derga: "Lo, my son, great are our tidings, weary the steeds we ride, the red steeds from the *Síd* Mounds of *Donn Tetscorach*. Behold, signs of destruction and ending of life; the ravens are sated, the crows are filled; on the field of slaughter the sword edge is whetted; in the dark hours of night, broken bosses of shields! Lo, my son!"

Under many guises are the predictions made; for transformation is a common device. So the swineherd who foretells the Great *Tain* is, for the nonce, in the form of a worm; the Morrigan takes the form of a bird when she warns Cuchulainn, and again when she warns the Brown Bull; a bird-man, Midir, visits Etain, and later gives advice to Conaire, A Washer-at-the-Ford predicts the death of Cuchulainn; and Cormac learns of his end by the same means: "Standing on one foot and with one eye closed [the attitude, alone, presaging evil], she chanted:—

'I wash the harness of a king who will perish. . . .  
This is thine own harness, O Cormac,  
And the harness of thy men of trust.'

As with all primitive peoples, dreams and visions won respect from the ancient Irish, and frequently do we find them used as a vehicle for prophecy. The revelation may be made directly and plainly as when, in *The Wooing of Etain*, both Conchobar and Medb are warned of the coming conflict between their respective followers; but it may require interpretation as in the case of Eclath (mother of Cormac and wife of Art), who dreams that her head is struck off, and from her neck springs a tree whose branches reach over Erin. The obvious explanation is that Art will be slain, and their child will be king. (Queen Ragenhild, in the Norse story of *Halfdan the Black*, has a dream very similar to this.)

Through a vision at a bull-feast a man may mount a throne: "A bull used to be killed and thereof one man would eat his fill and drink a broth, and a spell of truth was chanted over him in his bed. Whoever he would see in his sleep would be king and the sleeper would perish if he uttered a falsehood." It is

by such a vision that Lugaid of the Red Stripes is declared king: "a young man, strong and noble, with two red streaks around him." By the same method Conaire receives the crown: "A man stark naked who shall go at the end of the night along one of the roads of Tara, having a stone and a sling—'tis he shall be king." A more poetic vision is that of the best known of Irish heroines, Derdrie, who sees coming to her and to the sons of Usnech, "three birds carrying in their beaks three drops of honey; they left with us the three drops of honey and took with them three drops of our blood." And a romantic vision is that which appears to Aileen of Leinste and to Baile the Sweet-Spoken. To each comes a horrible spectre who tells of the sudden death of the other.

A portent is common: Before the battle of Muirthemne a bodkin pierced Cuchulainn's foot, his horse weeps (like the horse of Achilles); the wine offered him by his mother, Dechtire, turns to blood; he meets three—the usual old-Irish *three*—crones from whom he receives by the left hand into the left hand that which is *geis* to him—the flesh of a hound. The great spear, famous in the *Tain bó Cualgne*, predicts by means of the silver rings chased around the haft. The howling of a dog presages the fall of Da Derga, the shaking of the spears and shields and the spilling of the wine, that of the house of Gerg. There is a report as of thunder when Cormac is born.

Occasionally, a life-token is the means of revealing to a man the length of his days. The Morrigu tells Cuchulainn his life is linked to that of a calf: "So lange wirst du am Leben bleiben, bis das Kalb, das sich im Leibe dieser Kuh befindet, ein Jahrling ist, und dieses ist es, das die Tain bó Cualnge veranlassen wird."—(Ir. Tex. 2: 248.) A goblet is given Teigue when he is in the land of promise, and "when it shall escape from thee, then in a short time after shalt thou die, and where thou shalt meet thy death is in the glen that is on the Boyne's side."

The subject-matter of Irish prophecy has to do, generally speaking, with battle, murder, and sudden death. The exceptions to this rule concern births and thrones. All these topics are popular in Greek, Norse, and Hebrew tales, also, but with a difference in treatment. In the first, that which is pre-

dicted is often of national importance, frequently relating to foreign policies; sometimes, too, a matter of retribution. In the second, the Norse stories, the prophecy is apt to touch a whole family, or develop one idea—as with Sigurd's race, or the greed for gold in the *Nibelungenlied*;—or show the working out of fate, as in the case of Grettir the Strong, whose uncontrollable violence reaps the whirlwind that has been predicted. Grettir's climacteric career seems to be directed, even impelled, by a malign fate whose inexorableness is recognized by all who know him, and finally by Grettir himself. In the third instance, the Hebrew tales, the prophecies again are national, racial (or at least tribal), and distinctly moral. Even when the wise woman of Endor employs her familiar spirit at the request of Saul, she does so in order to summon Samuel, who prophesies events that are the result of Saul's sin: "Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord."

But none of this is to be found in these stories of the Heroic Cycle. No predictions are made as to war with England or Scotland, though there may be a vague reference, as in *The Voyage of Snedgus and MacRiagla*, to a time when "foreigners shall spread over the land", but even here the event is plainly prophesied because it has already taken place. It is true the *Tain bó Cualgne* is prophesied three times, but that raid could hardly be considered national warfare. And as regards the ethical motive, there are just three instances among these sixty-nine examples where a prophesied event is the outcome of a criminal or even a careless act: Macha's curse on the men of Ulster (*The Debility of the Men of Ulster*), Conaire's death through fairy vengeance for Etain, and the compelling of Cuchulainn to seek the solution of the Doel Dermot mystery: "May you never rest sitting, or lying down, until you find out what it was that brought away the three sons of Doel Dermot out of their country."

Perhaps the subject oftenest prophesied is that of death, which comes frequently in battle, often through murder. Balor of the Evil Eye dies, as has been foretold, by the hand of his grandson, Lug; Art and Mongan predict their own end; Loegaire meets his destiny "between Alba and Erin", where the elements take

vengeance into their own hands, and he dies after breaking his oath sworn by the wind and the sun.

Among the births prophesied are those of Conchobar (who shall be born the same day as Jesus Christ); of Derdrie (about whom "the greatest amount of blood will be spilt that has been spilt in Eiren for generations and ages past, and the three heroes of the greatest renown in the land shall lose their lives on her account"); of Eochaid Bres ("for every beautiful thing that is seen in Ireland whether plain or fortress or ale or torch or woman, man or steed, will be compared to that boy, so that men will say of it: 'It is a Bres.'").

The future occupants of the thrones of Ireland are material for a number of predictions. Conn receives a long list of the rulers who shall follow him. The possession of a throne is foretold before the birth or during the infancy of Conchobar, Conaire, Morann macMain, Niall, Lugaid, and Cormac. Dathi, king of Tara, has a Macbeth experience when a druid comes into his room exclaiming, "Art thou asleep, O king of Erin and Albain?"

The subjects for prophecy that I have cited touch individuals particularly, but there are occasionally found instances where a general experience is foreshadowed. Besides the predictions of the Great *Tain*, already referred to, we read of the destiny of Da Derga's Hostel, of Da Choca's, of the house of Gerg, and of the magic lake that shall drown Eochaid, son of Maired, and all his people, save only Liban who shall live as a mermaid. To this group of general interests belong the predictions of the coming of St. Patrick and the new faith, most of the prophecies being made, however, after both priest and religion were established in Ireland. Conn is assured that "a Tailcenn shall come, he will erect many cities, churches, and magic houses; many kings will take up pilgrims' staffs." King Loegaire learns that "adze-heads will come over a furious sea —

" Their mantles hole-headed,  
Their staffs crook-headed,  
Their tables in the east of their houses."

Bran hears from a mysterious woman with a silver branch (a common token from the Other-world) that —

"A great birth will come after ages  
That will not be in a lofty place;  
The son of a woman whose name will not be known.  
He will seize the rule of the many thousands."

A form of prophecy frequently used in folk-tales, is the prophecy that retaliates. I find only two instances in these Irish stories. The first comes from Esirt (poet of Jubhdan), who being insulted by his king tells him "thou shalt thyself be five years captive in Emania." The second example is found in the declaration of the king of Hy Maine to Cuchulainn: he shall know no rest until he finds why the sons of Doel Dermot are in exile.

There remains but one other subject for discussion in connection with the material of old-Irish prophecy: the incomprehensible (in direct prophecy, not in dreams). Here, too, instances are rare. The poet Esirt predicts that Jubhdan will never leave Fergus's court until he has abandoned his most precious possession—which turns out unexpectedly enough to be his shoes. Medb's druid delivers the only oracular prediction: "Never mind who does or does not return [from the *Tain*], you will return."

Most of these prophecies, it will have been noticed, are commonplace enough. A man will be born, another will die, a third will be king. Those are, unquestionably, important matters, but they do not startle the seasoned reader of narrative. Even if we look closely for something "special" we find only these: one false prophecy (*Baile the Sweet-Spoken*), one given for a fee (*Voyage of Bran*), two where men prophesy their own deaths (*Art and Mongan*), and two that are malicious (*Wooing of Ferb*). The materials most familiar in folk-lore and in mythology are absent here; there is just one simpleton-prophecy (*Death of Echoaid, son of Mairid*), one riddle prophecy (*The Sons of Doel Dermot*), one hero-return-prophecy (*The Deaths of Ailill and Conall cearnach*), one oracular-prophecy (*Tain bó Cualgne*). Nothing could make plainer the difference between Greek and Irish prophecy than does the fact that of the variety last mentioned, there is only a single instance in the group of stories on which I am basing my conclusions. Out of sixty-nine prophecies just one is "Greek."



Nor is there any similarity in the position held by, or in the deference shown to, the priest of the god in Greece, and to the person who prophesies in Ireland. In Greece, prophecy was in the hands of—in modern parlance—a trust. An organized body of priests interpreted the oracles of Zeus and Apollo and were able, therefore, to color the policies of the nation and to influence the character of the whole people as well as of individuals. This last power was strengthened by the report that only those free from sin might hope for an answer from the god. Divine will was often communicated through thunder, lightning, and wind, and through the ravings of the half-witted. Offerings at the shrines were encouraged, even enjoined.

Now in Ireland, who could or would might prophesy, nor was any particular respect shown to that one who did. It was the druid's learning that won him reverence, not his occasionally exercised gift of revelation. We find twenty references to his pronouncements on men and matters, where we find one to deliberate prophecy. Nor was greater deference shown the supernatural prophet. No place was sacred to him—Ireland lacked a Delphi or Dodona. The elements play no part in Irish predictions, and we read of but one instance where a simpleton reveals the future. On the contrary, it is only in his lucid intervals that Mac-da-cerda (made simple by a "magic wisp") can prophesy. The lack of ethical quality is even more marked. While, as has been pointed out, there are found a few examples where prophesied results may be traced to causes, yet in none of these instances, nor in any instance, is there a prediction that because a person has sinned he shall be subject to a particular experience. And there is a notable lack of "offerings"; only once is there a hint of payment for prophecy. A druid, "for a fee", predicts that the wife of Amargin will bear a son, and perhaps it is the reprehensible feature in the druid's behavior that leads him to add spitefully, "and no child will be less pious to his mother's kin."

We cannot claim, either, that Irish prophecy finds its reason for being in literary technique. Almost all the stories would be quite as successful without a prophecy. It is true that dramatic effect is enhanced by descriptions such as those of the Mor-



rigu, or the Red Men of the *Síd Mound*, but the only occasions where a prophecy actually motivates are in *Derdrie*, *The Sons of Doel Dermot*, and *The Debility of the Ultonians*.

In endeavoring to discover how far prophecy is a factor in the Irish tales of the Heroic Cycle, it is necessary first to employ negatives. Prophecy is not the possession of a single group of persons; it has no local habitation; it has no influence on the policies of the nation, or on individuals; it is not an integral part of the plot of the stories. And in these tales the plot's the thing,—not always a logical plot, not often a finished plot, but something definite does take place; men and women and the *Tuatha dé Danann* act.

If a god be the protagonist he is, save for a grace of magic, but as a mortal. He is superhuman in that he lives in the Other-world, can shift his shape, and dies only through violence. But in no other way is he superior to mankind. He is outwitted and outfought by mortals, his women are stolen (as in the case of Etain, and the fairy bride of Oengus), his home is destroyed. He gives no commands to human beings; he takes no vengeance except as a mortal might, never as a moral instrument. If he intervenes—or interferes—he may expect no consideration because of his supernatural qualities.

This leads me to the point I am trying to make: just as lightly as the Irish regarded the Other-world beings, so did they regard prophecy. Both were part of the scheme of things, matters to be thought of in planning an expedition or enterprise, but to which undue importance should not be attached. We rarely find a prophecy disbelieved, yet never do we see the surrendering of the will to announced destiny. When Cuchulainn hears Cathbad's prophecy that the boy who takes arms on a certain day will be celebrated, but will have a short life, there is no hesitation in Cuchulainn's mind. "It is little I would care," he says, "if my life were to last one day and one night only, so long as my name and the story of what I had done would live after me."

These long-ago Irishmen were quite capable of conducting their own affairs, giving no hostages to fate, feeling no dependence on a power greater than their own wills. Action was

their motive force: a combat, a voyage, a wooing, a cattle raid.

In these Irish tales of the Heroic Cycle there are a great many supernatural beings and a great many prophecies; there are, too, a great many fights, a great many feasts, a great many expeditions. All these things are created quite free and equal. But stronger than any one, stronger than all together, is the force of human determination and effort and achievement.

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## SAINT GILES'S FAIR

In the midst of the radical upheavals in England, Oxford alone preserves its wonted calm. The American tourist speeding through England finds Oxford as quiet as a park. The streets in summer are disturbed only when the cabby halts his scrawny horse and with a flourish of his whip points out upon the pavement "the very spot, Sir, where the martyrs met their death." The only faces set in protest of his lie are the carved effigies around the Sheldonian.

American tourists, indeed, are the one sign of life within the ancient borough. The railings on the Broad, which in term-time have more than once been decorated with despised viands spitted upon the sharp-pointed palings, now stand all bare. One cannot even hear the picturesque and forceful language of the bargemen, which alone could distract Robert Burton from his endless "Anatomy of Melancholy." The town is as clean-stripped of life as an ox-carcass in the town market.

It is, therefore, a part of the eternal unfitness of things that England should have seized this peaceful and mediæval cloister for a scene of its one relic of mediæval junketing, Saint Giles's Fair. For two days in September, the eighth and ninth, the shocked walls of old Saint John's, which have sheltered generations of English aristocrats, look down in high disapproval upon the orgies of the English peasantry. The president and fellows of Saint John's are the lords of the Manor of Walton, and it is a part of their official duties to regulate this mid-summer carnival, the largest in England. A stranger contrast could not be imagined than these university dons, grave and reverend, overlooking the rowdyism of the country yokels.

In the pageant at Oxford in 1907, the great series of scenic pictures ended with the eighteenth century view of Saint Giles's Fair. The writer was privileged to see it, and a gay and lovely scene it was. Here prettily dressed orange girls wandered through the crowds; there an old ballad-singer moved slowly along, wailing out his woeful ditty; further along on the green a country dance was afoot; and through it all strolled the ladies

and the gentlemen of the shire, the farmers and the yeomen in their best attire.

All this is gone. The spontaneity, the joyousness, the freedom, the grace of the old festival have disappeared utterly. In their place we find regulations, conventions, shows mechanical, where the mind lies torpid and sensations are provided. The one element remaining is the business one; for after all, Saint Giles's Fair is still a fair, and the townspeople still replenish their china-closets and linen-chests, kitchen-shelves and cellar-racks, from the itinerant merchant's stock of showy wares.

The old Saint Giles's was never so well regulated as the new. On the day before the fair wagons come puffing through the streets of the old town, gigantic, earth-shaking, thunderous, trailing behind the great steam roller in fantastic chains. In tawdriness and glitter they resemble our own circus vans. They gather at the west end of town by the railway station, and on Sunday preceding the fair the whole town proceeds to witness the ceremony of medical inspection. Endless are the speculations of the small boys as to what the vans contain. Innumerable are the anticipations of "the barber and the butcher and the smith" as to the appeals to merrymaking that the morrow will disclose. What mystery may not spring forth from "Miggs's Mammoth Merry-maker"?

Meanwhile the medical men have examined and pronounced free of danger to the health of the borough the visiting bands of mountebanks. Next morning, before sunrise, the ponderous dragons rumble back through the city to the square of old Saint Giles's, stretching from Saint Michael's up to where Banbury Road leads off. There they disgorge upon their allotted station. The vans of the modern amusement park, the ferris-wheel, the merry-go-rounds, the cinema shows, swings and shooting galleries, the bicycle runs and scenic railways, and the curious monsters called auto-gondolas, are set up in a twinkling as if by magic; and before seven o'clock in the morning the fair is on in full-blast.

But the crowds! From countryside and factory, from sweat-shops and from basements, from the river and docks, the proletariat of England swarm like bees out of a shaken hive. The

trains come in from every part of England bringing a new multitude. From early dawn till midnight the swarm overcomes the city like a march of locusts. Up and down within their long alleys between the amusement parks on Saint Giles's they wander, loiter; hot, dusty, fatigued, crowded beyond all comprehension, trying desperately to extract some joy out of this one holiday of the year. It is truly pitiful to see.

Yet the martyrs look down tranquilly from the monument, and the Saxon tower at Saint Michael's is undisturbed, and the Oxford dons mostly ignore this rude inundation of their quiet town. Only those who go to Saint Giles's need trouble themselves. Wander if you will along the Addison walk by Cherwell, down the Christ Church meadows, or to the hills beyond the river to the south, and the holy calm of Oxford which Matthew Arnold knew so well, will descend upon you like a benison. "I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—but many a dingle on the loved hillside, with thorns once studded, old, white-blossomed trees where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried high-tower'd the spikes of purple orchises, hath since our day put by the coronals of that forgotten time." You need not trouble your soul if you do not choose with the sordidness, the unquestionable misery of Saint Giles's Fair. Arnold did not.

And yet it fascinates. Is this England? Can this be Oxford? Whence do they come, these undersized, ill-fed, gaunt, pinched creatures? What has England done to nourish such a brood? There is naught but sheep-like crowding in that sweating flock; rudeness for gaiety, roughness for fun, cowed orderliness before the law and frank rowdiness when the law is not looking. The tickler brought from the New Year's crowds on Broadway, the powder boxes scattered with a feeble imitation of the Italian carnival spirit, the hugging and kissing in the desolate packed mass of vulgar humanity make the spirit of Saint Giles's unforgettably depressing. Is this in truth all that these people can do for recreation?

Wander with me up the street of the fair. Never mind the pushing and shoving. On the platform to the right a couple of roughs dressed as American cow-boys are attracting a mob into

their show, to the tune of pistol-shots. Before the cinema next to them, the barker outside the curtain has long ago given up any attempt to make himself heard above the roar of the crowd, and is now silently waving and beckoning the crowd into an unbearable den. There they sit packed and suffocated and silent, and see upon the screen an incredibly poor French set, then are disgorged again into the throng. So it goes up the whole street; the faces of the men and girls in the amusement places are wholly vacant without any joyful look. They make you think of the terrible photographs which years ago were in our magazines of the victims of famines in India; so dull, so listless, so without the fire of life are they. One is stirred with pity at their lot, and with indignation. Are these English people?

Somehow it disturbs the wandering American who has been reveling through the dukeries and great estates, "the stately homes of England", the vast open domain of the nobility and the county families. It takes the zest out of the joy of the old country. One cannot again gaze in forgetfulness of English classes.

When William Morris was living in Oxford preparing for his marriage in old St. Michael's, he must, I think, have seen Saint Giles's Fair. Some of the social problems which burned into his soul must have come to him as he looked into these faces. It takes "news from nowhere" to give any answer to the questions which spring up in the mind of one who wanders down Saint Giles's. And still the swarm comes back here, more miserable, if possible, than in the mid-century when Morris dwelt here, more undersized, more starved of beauty and of joy.

What are all these colleges worth if they cannot give the people something more than Saint Giles's? And the dons of Oxford have no answer to this question. They have even dodged the answer, for one hears that there is a strong movement on foot to put an end to this ghastly exhibition of English poverty and degeneration. It disturbs their equilibrium; it is better to let mud sink to the bottom and not disturb the beauty of the stream above. So Saint Giles's, after all, may be doomed.

But the questions which make plaguing spirits vex the soul of the visitor at Saint Giles's cannot be dismissed so easily. The



lords of the Manor of Walton may refuse this poor, starved humanity the two days of sorry merriment at the fair, but back in the basements and the factories, in the wretched country villages, and on the seaside docks, the victims of capitalization that has ruled England will still gaze out of lack-luster eyes, and will still spawn the English race of the future.

Well, on the evening of the second day the hurdy-gurdies and the swings are packed away, and the rumbling trains go for the last time down the Iffley Road towards the flaring lights of London. The excursion trains, more crowded than any cattle-cars, take back the merry-makers of Saint Giles's. The president and fellows of Saint John's sprinkle Saint Giles's with disinfectants; the city plunges into a week of cleaning, shaking itself; and once more the ancient city is free of the sordid mess of the fair, and sinks back into its cultured corner. Only the haunting memories of the two days hover around the old square; ghosts that will not be laid.

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## A CENTURY OF WASHINGTON IRVING

The outlines of Washington Irving's life are simple. His first thirty-two years were spent, except for a year and a half in Europe, in and about New York, where he was born. The seventeen years following were spent in Europe, chiefly in England and Spain. Then ten years at Sunnyside were followed by four more years in Spain as American minister. The last thirteen, again at Sunnyside, terminated in 1859.

In this lifetime Irving published more than a score of books. *Salmagundi* and the *Knickerbocker History of New York* represent the first period of humorous interest in local manners and history. The *Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge Hall*, and *Tales of a Traveller* represent what may be called the English period; the *Life of Columbus*, the *Conquest of Grenada*, the *Companions of Columbus*, and the *Alhambra*, all had their source in Spain. After the first return, *Astoria* represented a new interest in our own West. After the second, the *Life of Mahomet* returned to Spain and the Moors; *Wolfert's Roost* to the note of the *Sketch Book*. The lives of Goldsmith and Washington complete the author's concluding labors.

The central character of the *Sketch Book*, as Irving's most famous and most generally representative piece of work, justifies the attention that it has received. Its thirty-four papers classify themselves at the outset into half a dozen groups,—autobiographical, notes of racial and of national traits, excursions into literary criticism, descriptions of places and things, studies of manners and customs, and experiments in fiction. The last are, by common consent, the most important; but the others, also, reward attention.

The first two pieces and the last in the book are autobiographical. According to "The Author's Account of Himself", he prizes chiefly variety, picturesqueness, and distinction. Not finding these in the America of his day, except in landscape, he seeks them in Europe, in historical and literary associations, in cultivated manners and ancient customs. Art, also, is mentioned incidentally as a source of interest, but Irving's knowledge

of art was really very small. He further appreciates the youthful promise of his native country, but he would rather escape "from the commonplace realities of the present" and lose himself among "the shadowy grandeur of the past". Irving's conception of the past will be examined later, but it is early obvious that for him, as for Emerson, literature is an "effort of man to indemnify himself for the wrongs of his condition". This indemnity Irving finds in feeling, in fancy, in romance. For the time he becomes one of Mr. Henry James's "certain sort of American who must inevitably live in Europe". This mood may be youthful, but it is fundamental and universal, and the desire to satisfy it through travel amounts, Mr. James thinks, to a characteristically American trait.

In the second paper, "The Voyage", the familiarity of the material makes it easy to observe the author's manner of treatment. It, like all of the other papers, is prefaced by a poetical quotation, according to the good, old, leisurely fashion that immediately enlarges the picture by suggesting its setting in a rich frame of association. The musical effect of polysyllables, both in themselves and in combination, is noticeable at the outset. The first paragraph presents its argument in such words as,—*"the temporary absence of employment during the voyage is an excellent and imperceptible preparative for novelty in impressions from the populace of the other hemisphere."* The movement is thus at times elaborate and almost pompous, with parallelism and contrast, alliteration and cumulation. Thus the voyage "interposes a gulf not merely imaginary, but real, between us and our homes—a gulf subject to tempest, and fear, and uncertainty, rendering distance palpable and return precarious". But the movement, however elaborate, is always flowing, thanks to a gift for harmonious adjustment and melodious sequence of sound, and to a predominance of long, loose sentences, sufficiently varied by short, simple, rapid statements of observation or records of experience. Day dream, reverie and meditation, are prevalent, but always punctuated by suggestions of actual sensations. These sensations are often muscular, sometimes of temperature, frequently of hearing, but most frequently of sight,—of vision, often vivid, but oftenmost atmospheric,

with more sense for space than for line, and much more for light than for color. There are many little pictures of large things here,—as throughout Irving,—the tranquil sea, for example, with piles of golden clouds above the undulating billows, or the tumble of the porpoise, the heave of the grampus, and the dart of the shark through the blue water. The sketcher's brush is free but it is also sufficiently firm, with often a sure selection of detail like that of the image in the closed eye after a vivid impression. It is fortunate that Irving's predominant eye-mindedness had such range for he, like Wordsworth, had scarcely any nose,—in twenty pages on "The Christmas Dinner", for example, he gives us never a whiff and only a taste or two. It is but fair to say, however, that Ichabod Crane somewhat makes up the gustatory balance.

Thus, through Irving's style also, as one always may, we approach the author and his attitude,—a leisurely man of refined rather than cultivated tastes, yet alive with sensations, and especially gifted in vision. He follows, it is true, a tradition of fine writing, but with such a natural grace that even ephemeral material is invested with a permanent charm. Much of his material is now over-familiar, and his message is often so gentle that it is easily unheeded, but his manner has the permanence of art.

It is little wonder that in "L'Envoy" he records a happy reception of his work, finding even his critics sympathetic. His mild fun with them is very unlike many another author's bitterness,—the objection of each to some part of his work if taken together would condemn the whole, but their praise if similarly added would commend it. Hence he continues, cheerfully, to write as he likes. Incidentally, he finds that he has hit upon something that we know to be the practical invention of the American magazine,—a miscellany, for different humors, not all for any, but something for each. He carries out this programme, as he states it, with such good humor and such engaging solicitude for the comfort and satisfaction of his readers that he at once groups himself with those intimate essayists from Montaigne to Holmes, who establish a personal, friendly relation with whoever turns their pages.

This gentle, friendly quality of Irving's has been so generally recognized that proportion demands greater emphasis upon the contrasting vigor and independence of his notes on racial and national traits. Of the two studies of the American Indian the first, "Traits of Indian Character", states seriously the argument that is put satirically in the *Knickerbocker History of New York*, — that the white man has not only despoiled the Indian of his possessions, but has also traduced his character. The sketch of "Philip of Pokanoket", or King Philip, is a detailed illustration of the soundness of Irving's double contention. Its high pressure of righteous indignation must be ignored by whoever would think that Irving lacked vigor. His gifts of selection and of satire, also, are evident here, as in the quotation from a clerical enemy of Philip's who was "in much doubt then, and afterwards seriously inquired, whether burning enemies alive could be consistent with humanity and the benevolent principles of the gospel". In short, Irving's Indian papers are creditable alike to his humanity and to his good judgment. His instinct for the development of our natural resources, moreover, made him appreciate the richness of the Indian as literary material, although he left it to Cooper, Parkman, and Longfellow to give that theme its full and conclusive treatment.

In "English Writers on America", English prejudice and misrepresentation and American resentment and hostility are boldly censured as alike unworthy of England's past and America's future. A penetrating analysis of the causes of the animosity leads to a thoughtful and eloquent plea for mutual sympathy and appreciation. The compactness and force of this paper admirably display Irving's attitude as a discriminating patriot, and his eminent fitness for his great service in explaining the one country to the other. This paper alone would have made Irving what Thackeray called him, — "the first ambassador of letters from the new world to the old". The portraiture of John Bull, in the paper bearing that title, is equally candid and kindly, — as observant and judicial as Emerson's "English Traits" and as appreciative and sympathetic as any of Henry James's "passionate pilgrims". Irving's personal practice throughout his life of the international amenity that he com-



mended helped, moreover, to make his preaching surprisingly acceptable and most happily influential in both countries.

The four critical papers,—two of them specific, two general,—illustrate more critical principles than at first appear. The first, concerning the now forgotten Liverpool historian, Roscoe, after some youthful surprise that authors should be subjected to ordinary human vicissitudes, notes, as Mr. Howells also has done, the irresistible energy of the few minds that are self-prompted, self-sustained, almost self-taught, in spite of local, financial, and social disadvantages sufficient to crush or kill the talent of others. Again, although it is scarcely true that authors in general are primarily ambitious and self-indulgent or at least selfishly exclusive, public spirit and benevolence such as Irving's are still sufficiently exceptional to deserve emphasis. The example of Roscoe is also well chosen for America in that his writing was not the product, exclusively, of wealth and leisure, but of occasional moments in the midst of affairs, and thus happily illustrative of a happy interrelation between life and letters. These themes are not exhaustively treated, but their vital character is displayed and their discovery is creditable to Irving's penetration. Indeed, he is apt to see so much at a glance that he feels little need of further inquiry or analysis. His problem presents itself chiefly as one of description or exposition. Hence, probably with a fluency that sometimes approaches the diffuse, the fanciful, and the sentimental, this paper glides to its end, not in critical estimate or conclusion, but in accounts of his author's financial fortune or adversity and a description of his spacious but now deserted mansion.

In the paper concerning "A Royal Poet" the writer finds himself in Windsor Castle, which impresses him chiefly as "a place full of storied and poetical associations",—another indication of his views of the past. The weather is "of that voluptuous and vernal kind which calls forth all of the latent romance of a man's temperament",—his mood, therefore, becomes one "of mere poetical susceptibility". This he deems especially suitable for a visit to the keep and for thoughts of its one-time prisoner, James the First, of Scotland. The consequent paper illustrates that variety of criticism which is frankly the chemistry



of a book and the critic's mind and mood. Many phrases,—such as “acute sensibility”, “enamored feeling”, “tender and indefinable reveries”, “elegant tastes”, “touching pathos”, “sweet morality”, “the necromantic power of the imagination”, “the fairy land of poetry”, and “magical lures of poetry and fiction”,—indicate again that among Irving's ingredients sensitive observation and quick emotion predominate over discrimination and judgment. Illustrations rather than reasons are presented, in a diction that is allusive, metaphorical, and suggestive, rather than precise. Circumstances, however, are not neglected, the emotion is genuine, and the ornate, much adjectived, often superlative, diction clothes actual realization of interesting truths, although the inexperience of the author frequently appears, as in his surprise that a king has emotions like himself. In this way King James,—in a mood of latency developed through seclusion—is shown to experience a double stimulus to literary creation. Reading Boëthius's *Consolation of Philosophy* he determines to record his own life in similar fashion; subjectively, the contrast between his confinement and the revel of the year without wakes desires for companionship and affection, both of which are met by a lovely lady walking in the garden beneath his window. Her departure leaves the poet in a vision,—whether real or fancied Irving does not determine except by concluding, temporarily, “let us not, however, reject every romance as being incompatible with real life”. This paper, like the preceding, concludes with description,—of James's subsequent history, his place of confinement, and his character as a man. Incidentally, there are appreciations of the value of brevity in the expression of pathos, of minute detail in picturesque description, of freshness, genuineness, delicacy, and urbanity in sentiment. There is also statement of an often-forgotten truth concerning literary influences,—“there are always, however, general features of resemblance in the works of contemporary authors, which are not so much borrowed from each other as from the times”, and there is unhesitating commendation for historical fiction as it is illustrated in the then new romances of Irving's great friend Sir Walter.

In the two papers of general criticism the author's attitude is

expressed in fanciful invention as well as in direct statement. In "The Art of Book-Making", old authors pounce out of their portraits to strip their modern despoilers of their borrowed thoughts and fancies,—a vivid as well as a logical argument for genuineness in matter and manner. "The Multiplicity of Literature", a colloquy with an old book, summarizes the plethora of publications, the low standard of public appreciation, the need for criticism, and, on the other hand, the permanence of books that penetrate to fundamental human nature, and the preëminent permanence of poetry in dealing with unchanging emotions, through selected thought and imagery, in the most terse and select language. It is interesting to find Irving, so exclusively a prose writer and so habitually a diffuse one, thus so rightly prize poetry as the finest distillate of the human spirit, a compact casket of ever brilliant jewels. So Irving displays almost inadvertently a fine although a yet rather undeveloped gift for literary criticism. Already he has a sound knowledge of literature,—its general laws and its particular phenomena, its source in personal temper and experience, its modification through social conditions and tendencies. He shows unusual appreciation of the usefulness of criticism in selecting the noteworthy from the negligible. He knows the perennial value of genuine emotional themes, of penetration and selection in observation, and of compactness and distinction in expression. For structure and arrangement he has little conscious care. His own experience of the rise and flow of the creative impulse, moreover, makes him realize his own gifts and limitations,—that he is inventive and diffuse rather than critical and systematic. Hence, as a personal rule of literary faith and practice, he esteems, above everything, the integrity and the delicacy of his impression, and makes his chief endeavor for fidelity and fullness of description and exposition. Almost his only restriction in procedure is a benevolence of intention,—at first spontaneous, but later reasoned and deliberate as well—and always a consequent urbanity of manner.

Of the four pieces descriptive of places, "Westminster Abbey" is in the vein of Addison's famous sketch in the *Spectator*, but much fuller of description. This description shows a cumulative

use of what might be called mood or tone-words,—such as ‘sober’, ‘melancholy’, ‘shadows’, ‘gloom’, and ‘mournful’,—all of which occur in the first six lines. Many polysyllables lend appropriate dignity and solemnity to the diction, and many adjectives conduce to a certain richness of effect. Much of the description, also, is in light and shade, with the contrast between outer sunshine and inner gloom, and the gradual decline of the illumination of the day. Visual impressions are indeed so plentiful that a sense of rich detail is everywhere present, but they are also so unarranged that they seem vague and lacking in solidity. Variations and contrasts of sound as well as of light and shade are also frequent,—the long reverberations of the abbey clock, the bell for prayers, the casual footsteps, the stir of life without, the silence of death within, the sounds of the church itself, with service, choir, and organ. Irving’s rich indefiniteness is particularly successful here in suggesting the organ music. Such impressions seem directly to give rise to the thought of the piece,—trophies and tombs, ambition and oblivion, the futility of pride, the equality of the grave, great men crowded from far and wide, friends and enemies, oppressors and oppressed, all reduced to monumental artifice to attract attention, except perhaps in the cases of a few authors who are remembered for their benevolence and their social service. Irving, on the whole, dearly loves the past, as he knows it through surviving customs, and through literary associations, which seldom go further back than Shakespeare. His appreciation of architecture and sculpture is quite unskilled: he knows practically nothing of artists, and schools, and periods. Such things are merely old or very old, they either please him perfectly or they appear “gothic” and barbarous; and yet, as in the matter of literary criticism, his untrained taste is so instinctively fine that he disesteems the bad although it be famous, and so esteems the excellent that some of the passages of this paper are still quoted by the guide-books as the best out of all that has been written concerning certain parts of the abbey. It may then seem meticulous to agree with Irving that his impressions in this paper are confused and indistinct. They do all that mere impressionism can. Selected impressions of people may be suggestive and

interpretative in themselves, but mere impressionism of things as mere realism lacks the scope of time and space, the interpretation of selection and arrangement, and all of the more abstract and logical qualities that are demanded for a complete and competent treatment of such a theme. We wonder at the mere repetition in various forms of the author's sole conclusion—a commonplace of the abbey since Addison's paper and probably for centuries before—"the emptiness of renown, and the certainty of oblivion". When the piece ends without any of the very obvious next steps in the intellectual argument, we come to prize it, as of all the essays in the world, one of the most untroubled by thought.

The paper on "London Antiques"—the Temple and the Charterhouse—is also scarcely more than pleasant impressionism which, to use Emerson's phrase for Lowell, sometimes has to pump. The latter half, especially, suffers in comparison with the far better-informed treatment of Lamb and of Thackeray. The paper on "Stratford-on-Avon", however, after a brief description of Shakespeare's birthplace, provides a very business-like and complete account of his tomb and its setting, and an especially welcome, because unusual, account of Sir Thomas Lucy's seat of Charlecote. And there is an admirable interpretative interlude on the character of the rural scenery that influenced Shakespeare's early life and much of his work. Here, also, is Irving's well-known praise of inns, which is written more at large in "The Inn Kitchen". At the outset, too, there is a statement of his imaginative creed,—“I am . . . a ready believer in relics, legends, and local anecdotes. . . . What is it to us, whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into a belief of them, and enjoy all the reality?” Finally, he confesses, “I like to deck out pictures for my own entertainment”, and concludes with praise of the poet who “spread the magic of his mind over the very face of nature, . . . gilded the dull realities of life with innocent illusions . . . and . . . beguiled the spirit . . . with all the cordial and cheerful sympathies of social life.”

“The Boar's Head Tavern” is literary criticism shading into description of manners. Here is parody of the unnecessarily

voluminous character of Shakespearean scholarship. There is also irony, in the introduction, the conclusion, and throughout, in phrases like "churchwardens and other mighty men", "fish-mongers of renown", and the attorney who never twisted the truth "except in the way of business". Nor must one forget, by way of humor of the incongruous, the story of the faithful ghost that responded to a call of "waiter", to the consternation of a tavern club. Here, also, is the soundest Shakespearean appreciation, in praise of the vividness, naturalness, force, and consistency that cause his characters to mingle in the memory with actual people,—a severe but sound standard for literary creation. This is enforced by the statements that heroes of fiction are often as interesting and valuable to us as heroes of history, and, specifically, that Falstaff is worth any number of actual great men. The reasons for praising that worthy are also well chosen,—he "has enlarged the boundaries of human enjoyment; he has added vast regions of wit and good humor,—and has bequeathed a never-failing inheritance of jolly laughter to make mankind merrier and better." Merrier and better are, by the way, to Irving, nearly synonymous. Thus, following the order of his impressions, the author seeks Falstaff's favorite inn, but finds only its site and sign, traditions of its passing, and certain apocryphal relics. The curiosity of his search, however, and his zest of discovery are worthy of Samuel Pepys, who himself might have written of a tavern: "this medley of kitchen, parlor, and hall . . . carried me back to earlier times, and pleased me." Irving's eye for salient detail in character is also rewarded, incidentally, by "the indisputable chronicler of the neighborhood . . . [with a] liberal communicative disposition", "the sexton, . . . a meek acquiescing little man; of a bowing, lowly habit", "the deputy organist who had a moist look out of the eye", and "the shabby [but sententious] gentleman in the red nose and oil-cloth hat." Such was the method that Dickens admired in Irving and followed himself.

"Little Britain" is more circumstantial, historic, and social, in its cumulative survey of the life of a London neighborhood. Its history and traces of former splendor surround the narrator's



lodgings after the fashion of some of Thackeray's sketches. Old manners and customs and beliefs abound. The apothecary and the cheesemonger are rival oracles. Burial societies and drinking clubs, St. Bartholomew's fair and the Lord Mayor's show, keep up the good old ways. But the aspiring family of a retired butcher has introduced social ambitions which spread until the family of a rich oilman leads an opposing party, all to the deterioration of genuine old manners before the gaucheries of money and fashion.

The author turns with relief to "Rural Life in England" as more happily representative of national character. Freedom and naturalness, the joys of garden and park, have become national ideals. Country recreations give health and manliness and democracy and make the country a delight in picturesqueness and domesticity, a paradise for the rich, and, as in "The Angler", for the poor as well. This doctrine of country life, although enforced by Irving's practice as well as his preaching, is just beginning to be generally appreciated in these United States. In "The Country Church" Irving found the centre of England's rural life,—checking with its traditional dignity the pretensions of the merely rich, a service that education and taste seem to be beginning to perform for us. Even a "Sunday in London" shows something of the same restfulness, religious consolation, social enjoyment, and love of fresh air. "Rural Funerals" and grave-yard customs strike Irving not only as displaying "the rich vein of melancholy which runs through English character", but also as illustrating the softening and refining influences of sorrow in daily life. If this be true, and it is hard to question, then European visitors are right in censuring what they now find characteristic of the United States, especially of our cities,—an anxious avoidance of thought about death. Here too, it may be, that Irving, like Bryant, has a moral lesson for the present day.

Irving's five Christmas pieces have a perennial charm in themselves, they are especially interpretative of his general literary intention, and they made a new selection and recombination of Christmas ideals so appealing as to have set the standard ever since. Of all old English customs those of Christmas seem to



him the most heartfelt, in the services of the church and in family reunions. The season turns one from outdoor nature to indoor social pleasures about the fireside, or in festivals surviving from more vigorous and more honest times. Thus English Christmas feasting, gifts, decorations, and song, yield increased charity, renewed family affection, and a general kindliness. These general observations are succeeded and illustrated by four descriptive papers. In "The Stage Coach" the author meets various holiday passengers, especially schoolboys going home for vacation. The coachman is truly Dickensian in manner, appearance, and costume. A coach trip is always cheerful, but especially so at this season of anticipation of family reunion, cheer in the inns, and welcome for guests, like that of Bracebridge Hall for the author. There, on Christmas Eve, he is to find an old-time Christmas. Passing the park walls and the greetings of the lodge keeper, the author and his host walk up the avenue, dear through long associations. Welcomed by many dogs, they reach the fine, varied old mansion, cheery with the Christmas songs and games of the servants. They are greeted by the benevolently whimsical squire, and by the family at cards and games in the hall, which is decorated in the good old fashion and has the yule-log burning, the whole epitomizing genuine and warm hospitality. Supper in the oaken dining room hung with family portraits, provides traditional Christmas Eve dishes and much mirth from a bachelor relative and Master Simon, a factotum of the squire's. His song, the music of an old harper, an after-supper dance, the jokes of a young collegian, a young officer's accomplishments, and the charms of the squire's ward, are succeeded by shaking hands for good-night and the writer's falling asleep amid antique furnishings to the sound of the village waits. Nowhere does Irving better elaborate his favorite theme of the happiness of the home and hospitality. On Christmas Day he is waked by a carol sung by the children, and pleased by the wintry landscape before his window. Prayers are read in the family chapel by the squire and Master Simon, and are concluded by a song of their making. A hearty breakfast is followed by a walk about the grounds, lively with dogs and brilliant with peacocks, which

are specially favored because of their ancient repute. Master Simon hurries away to rehearse the village choir, and the bell calls the group to church near the village. The parson is a college friend of the squire's and an antiquary, learned and punctilious. In the venerable church Master Simon leads the responses, but his village orchestra and choir do him little credit. A learned antiquarian sermon is followed by the cordial greetings of the congregation and a pleasant return walk, the squire, pleased at the evident comfort of the country folk, but lamenting the decay of many customs that made the poor happier and more content. In spite of the difficulty of reviving these customs, the villagers practise some of them to please the squire, and his entertainment changes their awkwardness into merriment,—a pleasant illustration of the working of Irving's favorite doctrine of the beneficence of benevolence. The Christmas Dinner, announced in ancient fashion by striking the rolling-pin upon the dresser, is served in the hall, to the sound of a harp, and smiled upon by the family portraits. The parson's formal grace being completed, the butler, with attendant candle-bearers, enters, to the sound of an old carol, with an imitation boar's head, which is elucidated by the parson. Other ancient dishes and decorations, like a peacock pie, are often merely imitations to please the squire. But a genuine wassail bowl is mixed by him and passed about with song, joke, and merriment. The ladies retiring, the squire tells his favorite tales, Master Simon sings, and the parson dozes until all return to the drawing room. Leaving the younger folks to games, the parson tells family legends, to the delight of the squire, until the youngsters enter as Christmas masks and dance a minuet to the satisfaction of all. All of this the author tells for its pleasantness and its contribution not to wisdom but to good humor. He concludes in a passage that is interpretative not only of these papers but of the whole book and of the author's general literary intention as well, — "What, after all, is the mite of wisdom that I could throw into the mass of knowledge. If, however, I can rub out one wrinkle from the brow of care, or beguile the heavy heart of one moment of sorrow,—prompt a benevolent view of human nature, and make my reader more in a good humor with his fellow

beings and himself, surely, surely I shall not then have written entirely in vain."

The final category of papers in the *Sketch Book*, the experiments in fiction, are of two sorts,—tales of sentiment and of mystery. The tales of sentiment may be dismissed briefly. "The Broken Heart"—of a bereaved wife—and "The Pride of the Village"—of a deserted sweetheart—deal with matters in which Irving was not expert, in a manner that suggests the fanciful bachelordom of which some people accuse Mr. Henry James. They are, moreover, based upon the no longer popular theory that "a woman's whole life is a history of her affections." The others, "The Wife"—who bore financial reverses happily—and "The Widow and Her Son"—a decrepit mother's sadness over her boy's sickness, wounds, and death,—these furnish promising themes, but are merely very slender statements of them and of their appeals to sentiment or pathos, without either analysis or any fulness of concrete exposition. The tales of mystery, however, present the great names of "The Spectre Bridegroom", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", and "Rip Van Winkle".

"The Spectre Bridegroom" is frankly a retelling of a famous old story,—a French tale in a German setting. Briefly, the betrothed of the Baron's daughter is killed, a companion impersonates his spirit, and carries off the bride. The bride and bridegroom are sketched merely in outline, but the peremptory old baron and his setting, and the maiden aunts with their ridiculous tutelage, are pictured fully and picturesquely with all of Irving's gifts for the humor of the grotesque in character. The preparations for the wedding, the surprise at the absence of the lover, the atmosphere of ghostly stories, all admirably lead up to the companion's announcing himself as a spectre. With similar rapidity and emotional logic are managed the spectre's return to frighten the aunts from the niece's chamber, and again to carry away his sudden sweetheart who, it must be remembered, had never seen the real bridegroom; and, finally, the return of the wedded pair to receive the parental blessing. Throughout we have Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" until the mystery becomes clear. In conclusion,

we are satisfied with the explanation and with the success of the trick, with the outwitting of the blustering baron and the foolish aunts, and finally, with the happy union of the lovers, and we are by exclusion gradually made to forget the sorrows of the original bridegroom, who has to be murdered in order that the story may be worth the telling. The whole is a masterpiece of the technique of narration.

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is very similar in action,—the bold bridegroom wins the willing fair through a fabricated mystery that deceives the foolish, who is here the rival swain. Again the story is an old one in a new setting. And again the mystery is explained, as it is not, by the way, in "Rip". Here, however, the action, although highly successful, is yet less so than the picturing of the setting and the masterly depiction of character, both of which make the "Legend" the fullest canvas in the *Sketch Book*. It is half again as long as "Rip". The setting of the tale is pictured with a wealth of visible and audible detail. Actual coves and valleys and other natural features of the lower Hudson region are filled with little pictures of all the details of human habitation, both out of doors and in. The whole is bathed in a mellow atmosphere of drowsy stillness, emphasized by the murmur of tranquillity. The manners of the characters, like Cooper's, moreover, present a real picture of the times, particularly of the Dutch abundance and content so well displayed in the *Knickerbocker History of New York*. The description of the quilting and the recounting of the legendary lore are no less admirable in themselves than in their contribution to the action. The dominance of the particular tale of the headless horseman is a triumph of what Poe called 'tone'. The action, also, as in "Rip", perfectly blends the subjective and the objective. Ichabod Crane's anxieties,—at night-sounds, at the sight of fireflies, at the thump of a blundering beetle, at the crunch of his steps on the snow, at the whiff of the wind, at the sight of snow-shrouded bushes,—these are as real as anything in the tale. The action, also, is well mingled and intensified by Ichabod's rejection by Katrina just before his fright. The atmosphere of superstition and the brooding dominance of the headless horseman seem almost of themselves to become con-

crete in the story, and to focus the unfortunate hero's saturation with the region's superstitions, his dismal mood, the gloomy road, the dark, hushed night, with all its mysterious shadows and sounds, into the intense although humorous crisis, and the rapid conclusion. But even the ten pages of rapid action must yield the palm to the twenty of leisurely description. This proportion of two parts of description to one of narrative also holds good for "Rip", thus indicating that Irving happened upon the short story for America merely by carrying description through setting and character into action. All the characters in the "Legend" except Ichabod are merely sketched, but they are clear and complete, especially the blooming and coquettish Katrina, her thriving, placid father, and the triumphant Brom, at the head of his boisterous crew. The negro messenger and the negro musician show, too, that Irving, like Cooper, saw the promise of that race for our literature. But Ichabod Crane himself is a masterpiece of grotesque consistency made real to our eyes and ears and sympathies through a wealth of precise detail. Here Irving's distaste for analysis, a thing so often hurtful in character drawing—aids him to an undiluted product of evocation. Thus Ichabod's name is highly appropriate and suggestive yet not improbable. His length and looseness, his small head and large feet, his grotesque and ill-assorted features, are perfect hyperbole and yet quite possible. His clothing and even his borrowed horse are equally appropriate. His insatiable and enthusiastic hunger, his social service and standing as a learned, leisurely, accomplished person who can carry current gossip and who loves to tell old tales,—all of these traits, so delightful in themselves, culminate in a wonderfully consistent character. Ichabod is, moreover, consistent in action,—whether walking, riding, dancing, or singing; even when frightened out of his wits. His sentiment and his ambition, his folly and his persistence, are admirably contrasted traits. Truly "an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity", as Irving sums him up, "a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance—yielding, but tough". Withal we are made to know him so well that, as with some of the people of Dickens, we should not be surprised to meet him in the flesh. If, in fine, Ichabod Crane is not "one



of the great prize men of fiction" it is merely because a brief sketch does not give him scope enough. He is unquestionably a real creation, breathing the breath of life.

Rip Van Winkle, of course, is one of those rare characters in fiction that transcend mere books and bookishness and mingle with the daily life of men. This may be due partly to his dramatization, but many people know him who have neither read the *Sketch Book* nor had the privilege of seeing Mr. Jefferson's impersonation. He is evoked so fully and consistently that he illustrates Mr. Zangwill's paradox that "fiction is the highest form of truth." Again we have a world-old, world-wide story,—here of the familiar mystery of sleep—with new characters and new setting. It is definitely located in the Catskills by the Hudson that Irving loved. Nature and weather, place and time, character and manners, are all vividly presented in Irving's characteristic manner, of sweeping general description made real by selected 'bits' that are full of salient detail. The little Dutch village is pictured with the affection of Knickerbocker, and its modifications under democracy with Knickerbocker's searching satire. Rip is as consistently inconsistent as Ichabod, and his fortune flows as inevitably from his nature. His good nature and kindness bring him friends and fame; because of his idleness and perversity he is poor and hen-pecked. We pardon his faults because we know and understand him so thoroughly,—his nature and appearance, his words and actions, the words and actions of others to and concerning him. Even his dog is interpretative of his character. Similarly, we lack sympathy with Dame Van Winkle in her thoroughly justified severity, because we see her only in one unlovely aspect. Rip's adventure with the Dutchmen, the flagon, and the twenty years' sleep we accept as a charming fiction, a bit of race-and-nature mythology with true imaginative validity. If one must rationalize it, it is merely a pleasant way of putting the dramatist's "twenty years later", without disturbing the logic of events. The most realistic could scarcely censure the device, for its working out displays all of Irving's best artistry of completeness of detail arranged into a unified whole. There is a similar balance of leisure and rapidity in the movement; of grace and

vigor, of raciness and richness in the diction. And aside from its happiness in presenting perfect examples of Irving's description, characterization, structure, and style, Rip is equally representative of Irving's humor of exaggeration, incongruity, and irony; his pathos of situation, always restrained in statement; and, above all, of his at first spontaneous and afterward deliberate solution of life,—the creed of good humor and universal kindness.

Such an exposition of such a work as the *Sketch Book* constitutes its highest praise. Intellectually, Irving was not analytic, not logical, not even very thoughtful. His cultivation, according to present standards, lacked history, art, perhaps even literature. His attitude, although genuine and by no means without vigor, was frankly romantic. But his manner, traditionally dignified and ornate, he made also flexible and graceful, free and varied. His gifts were notable in their sensitive, selective, and appreciative vision; their clear, full, and picturesque description and exposition. His message, in both his life and work, was one of esteem for the good things of life and regard for one's fellows,—a truly eclectic and democratic teaching from one who was truly patriotic as only a cosmopolitan can be. With this equipment, his accomplishment was large and high. He practically invented the short-story and the magazine, he permanently revived the Christmas spirit and he developed international amenity, he taught us and the world to appreciate our scenery and history, our cosmopolitan population and their manners. He was notably successful in narration, he created great characters in fiction, and he left a permanent lesson and example of simplicity, sincerity, and kindness. All of this in the *Sketch Book*.

There are those that prefer the unchastened spontaneity of the earlier *Knickerbocker*, or the superior maturity and finish of the *Alhambra*. Yet others prefer *Bracebridge Hall*, *The Tales of a Traveller*, or the *Life of Goldsmith*. Indeed, every one of Irving's books has its champions, and his work is fairly extensive. It is one of the graces of the world of letters that in it there is no obligation for anybody to like anything. Whosoever will, however, may find in Irving the continuer of a fine tradi-

tion, a distinguished stylist, an inventor of notable new forms, an appreciator of life; the creator of characters, actions, and conceptions influential in life as well as letters; the first famous American man of letters; and a benevolent and charming personality. To like him and to continue to like him is not only a privilege, but a mark of both character and cultivation.

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## CONGREVE AS DRAMATIST

A due appreciation of Congreve's study of the amusing and the exquisite in affectation should bring him the wider reading which he deserves. It will scarcely help him to a popular success on the stage. I am too good a lover of Congreve to advocate an acting revival, because it is scarcely conceivable that stage presentations of these plays, except in a limited and special manner, could succeed.

To begin with, it is true as in the days of Voltaire, who criticized the looseness of this drama, that the ear is a greater prude than the eye,—

" Chastes sont les oreilles,  
Encor que les yeux soient fripons,"—

as La Fontaine puts it; but nowadays both eye and ear are delicate, at least among the audiences that attend "legitimate drama". And neither eye nor ear would endure with equanimity in a mixed audience the prurient dealings of a Tattle with Miss Prue, even though Prue should romp through her scenes as Mrs. Clive is reported to have done. The reader may sniff at this, and point with superiority or horror to our comic opera. Neither anatomy nor man's interest in it have changed in two hundred years, and our comic opera uses both. But there is a line fixed by convention for our generation across which the popular dramatist does not step, and this line Congreve, who wrote for audiences with conventions even more different from ours than were their morals, crosses in every play. The finest scenes, it is true, are but little tainted, but even in them there is an ineradicable freedom of language and action which would attract undue attention in the modern playhouse, and so destroy or lessen the artistic effect of the whole.

Furthermore, these plays are not well constructed,—and a play must be well constructed to stand transplanting from the stage of one century to that of another. Each one is an intrigue entangled about a love story, and there is so little that is natural about the union that the great scenes—Millamant's surrender with all the honors of war, the blue-stocking liaison of Brisk

and Lady Froth, Belinda and Araminta in St. James's Park—seem only to be happy inspirations but lightly attached to the main thread of the plot. Vagueness of story results, and a complicated action which exacts an undue attentiveness, and must sometimes have diverted the speculations of the audience from what was to occur to what had happened in the previous act. It was precisely "Love for Love" and "The Old Bachelor",—where the fault is least noticeable, and the plot, as a result, is least complex,—which were the popular successes among the four comedies.

In a recent criticism of Congreve's ability as a playwright, William Archer suggests that the author did not fit his scheme of acts to his material. He had, in other words, a three-act play without being conscious of the fact, and, being familiar with the five-act form only, made a bad tailor's job of the whole. The point seems difficult, and must be left to experts in dramaturgy. An easier explanation of Congreve's deficiencies in structure offers itself if one notes how much more he was interested in character than in action. Indeed, he belonged in the reaction against the story-play of the Elizabethans, a reaction in which Ben Jonson, Congreve's sponsor in so many things, was the first great name, and to which all the authors of the comedy of 'humors' contributed. Shakespeare's reaction was only partial. "Twelfth Night", of which Congreve's "Way of the World" is sometimes reminiscent, is full of 'humor' characters, yet never for an instant does this lover of the story relax his emphasis upon the plot. But Congreve tastes the fine comedy of the world through character almost exclusively. His plots are almost melodramatic. While his stage folk exhibit their charming or their amusing affectations the story is sometimes almost lost to sight, to suddenly appear in tangled complexity, as in the last scene of "The Way of the World", where loves, jealousies, intrigues, deeds of settlement and of trust are all swung together in the attempt to solve quickly the difficulties of the play. Having created Sir Paul Plyant (the elderly husband who kicked in bed and was pinned up in blankets by his wife), and the peppery Lady Wishfort, he is clearly more interested in their delightful follies than in the nasty and rather conventional intrigue plots which



they adorn. The actors pirouette while the story wanders, until it has to be jerked forward now and then with some haste.

Some improvement in technique is clearly needed. But since Molière, Jonson, Sheridan, all wrote good stage comedies of very much the same nature in five acts, it seems that Congreve's weakness is due not so much to the form he chose as to avoidable errors in the construction of his play. He was so interested in the depiction of personality that he neglected action, the all-important factor in an acting play.

And there is yet a third reason why Congreve did not and cannot hold the stage. The dialogue of his plays is not good dramatic dialogue. It is too literary—by which one means that its connotations, its subtle suggestions, its flavor will not and cannot cross the footlights with sufficient certainty to keep an average audience in touch with the intentions of the author. Shakespeare is literary and Shakespeare will act. Yes, but note that in all the successful acting plays of Shakespeare enough comes over to assure a comprehension of the play's development, even if much waits for the closet. Hermione on trial, for example. How many hearers of "A Winter's Tale" could give a full account of the emotions which inspire her great speech, and yet no one fails to understand its place in the dramatic argument. Shakespeare gets the points of his scenario into the ears of his audience, even when such thoughts as those expressed in Hamlet's soliloquy must necessarily wait upon a closer acquaintance with the text. But Congreve's motivation, his character exposition, and, worst of all, his complicated plots, are involved in a brilliant, subtle dialogue, where the speakers play for points of wit as tennis champions for points of score. For example, from the lines which follow, quoted from "The Way of the World", we are to learn that Mrs. Marwood is in love with Mirabell, who is indifferent to her; and that she is loved by Fainall:—

*Mira.* But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

*Fain.* What shou'd provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

*Mira.* She was always civil to me, 'till of late; I confess I am not one of

those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em ev'ry thing can refuse 'em nothing.

*Fain.* You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and tho' you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing; you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honor. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

*Mira.* You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted than is your wife.

An audience misses such cues more often than the actors miss theirs; and when we consider that accidents of delivery and of noise are sure to increase the difficulty, it is not in the least surprising. Nor is the fine and rapid repartee in which Congreve delighted more likely to reach them fully; and if it does not reach, then, as has been shown in our modern plays of wit, the sparkling dialogue is likely to confuse the ear. Public speakers and most playwrights know that a joke must be obvious in proportion to the size of the audience. Congreve's best wit, one hazards a guess, was table or drawing-room wit, even in his own day. One guesses that even in the successful plays—which are quite as 'literary' in dialogue as the others—it was the grossities of Prue, of Heartwell, of Bluffe, that raised the laughter of the house. Indeed, it is difficult to share Macaulay's surprise that "The Way of the World", most carefully written, most decent of the comedies, failed upon the stage.

It is probable, then, that we shall never see Congreve really successful in our theatre. The only comedies that were acted successfully in Congreve's own days are precisely the most offensive to our sense of what is decent. The best play was the least actable then, and is so now. His work loses when it becomes closet-drama merely, for who can imagine Millamant, with her shoals of fools attending, Suckling on her lips, her fan broken in a pet, the long labors of the toilet justified by perfect success—who can imagine Millamant fresh, vivid, and living, as the Bracegirdle played her! But for a century now these comedies, willy-nilly, *have* been closet-drama, nor do we fail of some compensation for their fate. As books, we may leave the indecencies to the judgment of the readers, who may skip or intellectualize them; we can dismiss the elusive plots as a slight objec-

tion, since one can always turn back the page. We can enjoy the wittiest and most polished of dramatic diction, rejoicing at what makes the stage manager grit his teeth.

Congreve has thus lost what distinction he enjoyed as a playwright; but he remains a great dramatist. This is not a contradiction in terms. The good playwright must be at least a *good* dramatist. The good dramatist may often be a very poor playwright. Many of our own best playwrights, such men as Scribe, or Sardou, or Dumas *filis*, or Bulwer-Lytton, have certainly not been great dramatists. Many really great dramatists, of whom Browning is an example, have been, on the whole, bad playwrights. Some great dramatists, as Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians, have been admirable in both functions, even if lapse of time, which bears with especial force upon writers for the theatre, has lessened the stageability of their plays. The dramatist is he who sees life as a conflict of wills—to use the good old term, which is hard to improve upon. In addition, he is able to pass beyond the bounds of his own experience, and give to each participant in the struggle a character and a voice proper to the actor conceived. He seizes upon a conflict, and creates the characters in it.

It is between Browning and Shakespeare that we will place Congreve. His plays exhibit the dramatist's view of life in a high though not the highest degree. They were imperfectly adapted to the stage of his own day; still less to our own. He was a middling playwright; his genius lay in his dramatic treatment of life.

There is an interesting resemblance between Congreve and Shakespeare in the exhibition of this dramatic instinct. Both men seem to have been possessed of a kind of amiable self-effacement. While the creatures of their brains were making such a stir in the world, their own quiet doings were peaceful and little marked. The anecdote which alone survives in popular knowledge from Congreve's life is Voltaire's assertion that he wished to be visited not as a writer but as a gentleman in private life. Voltaire thought this snobbishness; but the life of a private gentleman was the one to which Congreve always aspired, and this description fitted him exactly. Shakespeare's

ambition seems to have been the same. Both men, in fact, were of that ideal temper for the dramatist, which, free of the egoism which belongs to action, takes fire nevertheless at the imperfect attempts of the active world to express itself. Some readers, it is true, have tried to identify Mirabell, and his prototypes among the Congrevians, with Congreve. Possibly they are not altogether wrong, for the careless connoisseurship of life which animates these figures appears so frequently in the comedies that one is tempted to deduce an ego seeking expression. Furthermore, Mirabell, in mood if not in acts, is much like the impression one gains from the few contemporary descriptions of the agreeable, lazy Congreve, lover of port, of the Bracegirdle, and of pleasant, aristocratic society. If so, this personal appearance is probably a point of difference with Shakespeare; indeed, if true, it may account for the limits of sympathy which kept Congreve in his narrow field of rakish comedy, while Shakespeare sounded all men in their moods. But one doubts whether the identity was very close. The dramatist has narrowed his range, not to himself, but to a society with which he sympathized. It is not Congreve but Congreve's perception of the perfect libertine which finds a place in his plays.

Indeed it was his true dramatic instinct that made Congreve so successful in his depiction of a libertine society. Sensitive to every wish of this licentious world, he reflected the slime, but also the orchids above it. His own spirit unclouded by the grossness he did not condemn, his perception of human nature only limited by the walls of his court and coffee-house London, which shut out God, and the free air, and purity, but shut in much that was at least well worth considering, he was able to report with imaginative truth an important phase of civilization. A more moral, or a more satirical writer would have missed or perverted it. A less truly dramatic writer would have lacked the detachment requisite in order that its romantic and its humorous figures should be faithfully portrayed.

Thus favorable conditions waited upon the creation of these comedies, which, in spite of all moral strictures, remain the finest of our dramatic literature in prose. A gay society made itself libertine and elegant in imitation of the French court, but,

like all imitations of one race by another, took upon itself characteristics which belonged to its new home only. In England the rake spoke and acted with a coarseness which the court of Louis XIV did not tolerate. In England, too, the Millamants and Cynthias who flowered from the rank soil of libertinism were new creations, little more French than Ophelia was Danish, no more French than Juliet was Italian.

Into this society came the young Congreve. He took the comedy as he found it; that is, the comedy of men's humors begun by Jonson, and now directed toward the affectations of the smart set, and swung off its moral basis by the great debauch of the Restoration. He discovered, better than Wycherley and his other predecessors, the ideals of this society, and satirized more cleverly such of its defects as his limited vision permitted him to see. For him at least the romance of the gallant life was still untouched by remorse for the actualities which waited upon it. Therefore, being better romanticist than moralist, he left the coarse and brutal still unlovely, since he did not feel their ugliness; the noble he disengaged and perfected. Shakespeare once did a like service for the moralless, sunny-hearted toper—and gave us Falstaff. I do not believe that Millamant is more blameable or less worthy of praise.

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## REMINISCENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR BY A CONFEDERATE STAFF OFFICER\*

(FIRST PAPER)

### PLANTATION LIFE IN VIRGINIA BEFORE THE WAR

Everybody knows that Harper's Ferry was the scene of the John Brown raid in October, 1859, but there are things concerning the raid and Harper's Ferry and its surroundings which are not known to everybody.

In Harper's Ferry there was an armory and arsenal belonging to the government. At the time of the raid large quantities of arms, 100,000 stand of rifles, had been made there and were stored in the arsenal for use when needed. The town was situated at the northeastern end of the great Valley of Virginia, at the junction of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. It is supposed that this valley was, in the early days of the world, a great lake 120 miles long and fourteen to twenty miles wide, and that the pressure of waters had broken through the mountain barriers at Harper's Ferry, draining the lake, and leaving a fertile valley, washed on the south side by the Shenandoah river and on the northeast by the Potomac. Whether or not the theory of the lake be true, certainly an alluvial deposit made the valley celebrated for its fertility, yielding to the farmer a rich return for his labor, and sustaining a large population, prosperous, comfortable, and happy.

At Shepherdstown, twelve miles above Harper's Ferry, on the Potomac, the first boat was propelled by steam; in 1786 Rumsey, the inventor, launched his boat on the waters of the Potomac and attained a speed of four or five miles an hour against the current.

Rumsey lived alone in a log cabin on the banks of the river, was silent and meditative, and was generally thought by his neighbors to be wrong in his head. There was a path known as

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This is the first of a series of articles by the same author which will run through several numbers of the *Review*.—EDITOR.

Rumsey's walk, along the cliff which overhangs the river, where Rumsey walked for hours daily, with his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent, evidently thinking out his invention. He was a very poor man, but at last, by the aid of a few friends, he launched his boat with the results above stated. Being told that England was the proper place for his efforts, by the further aid of friends, he went there, but poverty stuck to him and the boat he built at Liverpool was attached by creditors, and his efforts thus ended in failure. After many trials and sufferings some friends persuaded him to address a meeting of the citizens of Liverpool which would be called. So many were his disappointments that he did not suppose a dozen people would be present. What must have been his surprise when, on entering the stage, he beheld a sea of faces awaiting his words. He arose to address his audience of interested and admiring people packed to the doors, but the task was beyond him, he fell in a fit of apoplexy, and died without uttering a word.

The northeasternmost end of the Valley of Virginia, embracing the counties of Jefferson, Clarke, Frederick, and Berkeley (Jefferson and Berkeley being now part of West Virginia) was settled by families mainly from Eastern Virginia, attracted by the fertility of the soil. These people brought with them the manners, habits, and social customs of old Virginia, including the institution of slavery. Up to the time of which I am writing (1859), I knew of no more refined, cultivated, and hospitable people anywhere, and I have had some knowledge of the people of this and foreign lands. They brought with them the institution of slavery, which, no matter what its faults may have been, gave to the people a phase of social life, an immunity from the drudgery of existence, a leisure for the cultivation of mind and manners, very favorable to the making of gentlemen and gentlewomen. People opposed to slavery did not believe this because they were simply ignorant of the subject. They said slavery was brutal, therefore slave-owners were brutal. Bad men are brutal often, and some slave-owners were brutal; but that they were brutal as a class, I deny.

There was a great deal of affection between the whites and blacks which could have been only the result of kindness.

Cruelty in our section was the exception and was universally condemned. I remember one man in our neighborhood who was cruel to his slaves. He was not a bad looking man, was always well dressed, and his manners were courtly in the extreme; but I have seen that man walk the streets of Charlestown on court days, when the streets were crowded, without having a friend to speak to him.

That kindness was the rule was fully proved during the civil war; for when all men had gone to the front, and only the women and negroes were left, the negroes were the only protectors and supporters the women had, and it is a historical fact that they performed their duties faithfully to the end, and not one single instance of outrage has been recorded. One of my slaves followed me for four years through the war, and, though given his freedom twice by our being captured, refused to be free and came back to me. And why should this not be so? I was the best friend he had in the world and he knew it.

My father had a negro whom he trusted fully. There was a wedding in our neighborhood at Bedington, the home of the Bedingers, and my sister was bridesmaid to her cousin. In those days a house party was arranged in much more simple fashion than now. The houses had few rooms, but generally very large ones, and all the bridesmaids were quartered in one room. At this wedding there was a girl from Hoboken, a Miss Stevens, of the wealthy family of that name.

When my sister returned home she did not unpack her trunk until late at night. My father was sitting up reading, when she entered the room in great distress, holding in her hands Miss Stevens's jewel-case, containing such jewels as we had never seen before. It was midnight and very cold, and a heavy snow was falling. My father sent for Frank, his trusted servant, and giving the case into his hands and telling him it was worth more than all he owned, ordered him to get a horse and ride to Bedington four miles distant and give the case into the hands of Miss Stevens, and no one else. Frank made the ride that stormy night and compelled the lady to come down in her night clothes and receive the jewel-case and write a letter of acknowledgement. Some careless maid had packed Miss Steven's jewels in my sister's trunk.

Before the railroad was built, Frank drove the wagon of flour to Baltimore, and, even after the railroad was built, still Frank went every year before Christmas to Baltimore with a load of flour, bringing back a load which made everybody, white and black, happy at that festival. He generally arrived after dark, and the big canopied wagon was driven to the front door and left there during the night, the six great smoking horses having been led away to the stable. After supper the wagon was unloaded and the treasures revealed to us, the children.

In those days the factor, or commission merchant, had duties which are unknown now. When he sold the flour he filled orders for every conceivable want of the family. I met an old factor, after I came to Baltimore to live, who told me he had, with the assistance of his wife, bought and had made up the entire trousseau of many a bride, besides outfits for the entire families of his friends in the country. The reader can imagine what an event Frank's arrival with his wagon was to us. I have now a handsome service of china which was brought from Baltimore on Frank's wagon.

One Christmas observance the negroes had which was very primitive and peculiar. When the hogs were killed in December they preserved the bladders and, inflating them and tying the necks tightly to retain the air, they hung them up to dry, and on Christmas morning, while the stars were shining, they laid them on the frozen ground under the windows of the white folks and exploded them by stamping on them, thus awakening the family and saluting them on the arrival of the great festival.

I remember part of one of the songs which the ox-driver sang in a slow monotone, sitting on the pole of the ox-cart, and keeping time to the slow, swinging steps of the oxen:—

“See de bull go to school, hooie booie, hooie booie,  
See de bull go to school, hooie booie John.  
See de bull go to school, wid his book on his horn,  
And dat is de las’ of old blind John.

“See de cow build de mill, hooie booie, hooie booie,  
See de cow build de mill, hooie booie John.  
See de cow build de mill, water runnin’ up de hill,  
An dat is de las’ of old blind John.”

The verses were endless and seem to have been extemporized as he drove along.

The kindly relations which existed between master and slave were quite natural. The negro in a state of slavery was docile, gentle, and easy-going. His freedom has given him the bump-tious arrogance with which the present generation is familiar. In slavery he was content as long as he did not suffer. Fire to warm him in winter and food to satisfy his hunger were the limits of his ambition. He loved to laugh and dance and sing songs. He loved approbation, and would do far more and better work for his master's smile than his frown.

And the master's part was not difficult. He was kind because kindness paid him well. He took care of his slave because it was money in his pocket to do so, and money out of his pocket if he did not. Of course, there were other and higher motives in individuals, but we must look for a motive for the multitude.

That the negro was better housed, better fed, better clothed, and better looked after in sickness than now, was simply because the owner had money at stake. He had warm clothing, plenty of wholesome food, and a good doctor when ill, because of that money. In September the cloth and yarn for his winter clothing were brought home from the factory, and the work of making up began and was only finished at Christmas. In every household there was a woman who could cut out the garments, and all the younger girls had been taught how to sew and knit. During the year, all the girls, in clean frocks, assembled in some room in the great house every morning, and the class of sewers and knitters was presided over by some spectacled old negro woman, whose word was law to them. The work of making up the clothing and knitting yarn socks went on under her supervision, and at Christmas every man and woman on the place appeared in new clothes and new shoes and warm woollen stockings. How many laboring people, white or black, have this provision now? And his other comforts. Every man had an overcoat every four years, and a flannel jacket, called by them (the negroes) a 'warmus', to wear under his waistcoat in cold weather. His tobacco was issued to him once a week, and when a boy I loved to be the distributor. Some-



times it was bought in kegs of about 100 pounds, and was called 'black-strap', and one strap, sometimes two, was the ration. Some of them chewed it and some of them smoked it in their corncob pipes. This was before the days of fertilizers, when tobacco was raised from the virgin soil. Every year a farmer would clear a small patch of ground, sufficient for the wants of his farm, and plant it in tobacco. The fragrance of the negro's corncob pipe was notorious, and was due to the fact that no fertilizer had been used in growing his tobacco.

After the harvest was ended each hand was paid one day's wages in gold and silver; the leading cradler got \$5.00, the other cradlers \$2.50, and the others the usual wages, down to the little boy who carried the sheaves. If the neighbors had not finished their harvest the force was allowed to go and help them out, receiving for themselves the usual wages.

In all the fields of corn the outside rows were planted in broom-corn for the negroes' use, and they spent the long winter evenings in making brooms, baskets, hampers, and split-bottom chairs, all of which found a ready sale in the country stores. The chairs were of all sizes, from the large porch chairs down to low sewing chairs and chairs for children. They managed to make them very comfortable, and they were substantial and lasted a lifetime. There was often on the farm an old rheumatic negro who had learned to make shoes, and he made boots to the knee and nailed in the soles for all the men, and shoes for all the women and children, the master paying him for his work a moderate sum.

Each man on the place was allotted a piece of ground which he planted in anything he liked, generally in melons, and the negroes' watermelons were always the best the farm produced. The thrifty negro was never without money in his pocket, and some have even been known to have money enough to buy their own freedom, or that of a wife or child who was in danger of being sold for the debts of their owner. In hot weather a ration of whisky steeped in tansy, and in malarial seasons a gill of whisky with five grains of quinine was issued to each man every morning before he went to his work. It is all over now, and I for one am glad of it; but the fact remains that the slave

did his work, and was moderately comfortable and happy, and the master took care of him. In those days the kitchen was generally detached or only connected with the house by a covered way. The meals were brought in by detachments and put down in front of the fire, inside the brass fender. When all was ready the meal was announced, the family took their seats, and the viands were served hot from the fire. There was also a plate warmer which stood on the hearth in front of the dining-room fire. The advantage of these arrangements was twofold,—you got a hot meal on a hot plate and you knew what your dinner was to be without a menu card. One evening my father (who had come in after a cold day on horseback) was sitting in front of the dining-room fire waiting for his supper, when Tom, the waiter, came in and put down on the hearth two plates of beaten biscuits. In leaning over to do this, several tell-tale biscuits dropped from the unbuttoned breast of his coat. Tom stood still, utterly dumfounded, but my father said promptly, "Tom, Tom, you old rascal, you are simply raining biscuits this evening. Pick 'em up, Tom, pick 'em up and put 'em in your pocket. It won't do to waste good biscuits, Tom",—and poor Tom picked up the biscuits and put them in his pocket and retired in great confusion and in sorrow, too, for he was blubbering like a great baby.

I remember well my mother's attitude toward our slaves. She had a school where all the young ones were taught (contrary to law). She taught them herself, and her Sunday school was always full. All our young slaves could read and some of them could write. My old Mammy always wrote to my mother when she was away from home. When we (the children) gathered around the table to study our lessons at night, she always took her place at the table with pen, ink, and paper. "Now, children," she would say, "I am going to write to your ma, and I don't want to give a bad account of any of you." I can remember the times I laid my weary head in Mammy's lap and said my sleepy prayers, and I remember her sitting nodding by my bedside until I should fall asleep. And I remember Mammy's funeral, for I was almost a man then. We were living in Charlestown, and Mammy was old and lived in a cabin at the

bottom of the garden walk and never came to the house. On good days she sat in her door in the sun with her Bible on her knees. My mother was old and feeble, but on good days she would walk down to the cabin, while in bad weather she would go on the back porch and look down the walk until the two saw each other, and then they would wave their hands at each other.

When Mammy died, my father determined to bury her in the Episcopal graveyard at Zion Church. Although a vestryman, he could not get permission, but the procession moved up the back street, about half a mile in the August sun, the coffin, carried by eight strong men, my father with his hat off, walking immediately behind it. When we came to the gates they were locked, but after a little delay they were opened somehow, and Mammy, the only negro, lies buried in Zion churchyard with the white folks, and some day she will rise as white as any there.

The most remarkable feature of the situation in our section was that refinement and even elegance could exist on such very small means. A man with a small farm (say 300 acres), worth about \$12,000, and a few slaves was really a prince,—a prince of the kind that no millionaire of the present day can even emulate. His butler, his coachman, his cook, were all his property. They could not strike for higher wages, they could not give notice of leaving. They were there and there to stay. Knowing this, the head of the house was free from some of the carking cares which beset the most favored people of the present age. He had leisure to think, to read, to cultivate his mind and manners, and to indulge himself in social pleasure. He was a better-educated man, a better-read man in current and ancient literature, and he was a better-mannered man than the man of the present age; freed from little worries, his temper was better, his heart was softer, and his disposition more sunny and genial. Social intercourse, therefore, was on a plane which is now unknown. There was little attempt at grandeur or extravagant display; a beautiful simplicity pervaded life and gave it its greatest charm.

Of course there were degrees of wealth: the man with thousands of acres and hundreds of slaves, the man with a few hundred acres and a few slaves; but the latter was all the same a

prince and was so recognized by the former. The man with the smaller fortune was just as independent as the other, and in some respects was in a rather more favored position. His cares were fewer, certainly, and his time was more his own, while his social position was as good as anybody's. He was received in all social functions, his financial status not being considered in the least. His intellectual and educational advantages were of great importance and his manners also. As a consequence, he was careful to cultivate these, and was generally entertaining and agreeable.

It is well known that the man I am describing was well posted in political and other matters of his own and antecedent epochs. I have known men of this stamp who knew well their Homer and their Thucydides, their Bacon and their Shakespeare, and were ready and apt in quotations, and at the same time were not lifted above current events, but rather gave them the preference in conversation, using their knowledge of the past in illustration of events of the present. Among such people social events were very different from those of the present day. A friend of mine told me of a dinner in New York the other day at which twenty-five hundred millions of dollars were present. He told me nothing of the people, what they said or what they did, he only told me in bated breath of the money. Such a dinner in olden times was of course unknown, and in comparing them, words cannot express my preference for the old. I can remember some of those dinners when the ladies had retired, and the decanters of old Madeira went circling round over the polished mahogany, and am filled with regret that those days have passed away forever.

In reading Sir Ronald Gower's book descriptive of the manner of living in England, especially at the court of Queen Victoria, where he was an intimate of the royal family, I was struck with the similarity to life in Virginia in the olden time. It was before the days of course-dinners,—a Russian innovation I believe,—and the queen would ask a guest to carve the pair of fowls in front of him, the cloth was removed, and the decanters of wine put on in coasters, and in many other respects the customs were indetical in the two countries. In the country

life in England to-day, many of the custom of the olden times are kept up, while in this country they are only a memory.

In our neighborhood, there was a debating society which met at the different farm houses in winter every Saturday night, the host at each meeting being ex-officio chairman. The neighborhood was composed of people of much more cultivation than will be found in a farming country now, and the debate was of unusual excellence, although there were the usual ridiculous failures. The farmers were not the only people who lived in the country. In our neighborhood old lawyers who had won their spurs, and some doctors, lived on farms and went every day to offices in town. There were two judges and four members or ex-members of Congress, two novelists, and two poets of some ability, and also two artists,—notably David Strother (afterwards General Strother of the Federal Army), who, in the late forties and early fifties, under the *nom de plume* of "Porte Crayon", wrote for *Harper's Magazine* and illustrated his writings; Alexander R. Botiler, who was in Congress at one time and was an orator as well as a caricaturist, whose efforts, we thought, would compare favorably with those of Leach and Du Maurier and Henry Bedinger, orator, poet, and wit, who during his short life represented his district in Congress, and had been also minister to Denmark and a friend and favorite of the king.

And the parson (the rector of our church) lived on a farm and reared a family of twelve children, among them eight of the wildest boys in the county. While some few of the best people lived in the town, yet the town was a place to go for shopping and business; the country was the place to live.

One Saturday, the debate was at our house, and I remember it well, though only eight years old, from an amusing incident. We had staying with us a cousin who had lately taken a wife and had brought her to make our acquaintance. During the day, he told my father he thought he would like to speak on the question for the evening. He was posted on it and had thought much upon the subject. My father told him that after the regular debate was over, anyone could speak, and if he arose he would recognize him. When the regular debaters had finished their very able efforts, my cousin George sprang to his



feet. He was usually a mild, amiable sort of young man, but now he looked quiet fierce and determined, and, stretching out his right arm, began: "Mr. President, it strikes me,"—but somehow he stuck there. My father bowed and smiled encouragingly, and he began again. "Mr. President, it strikes me,"—and still the words did not come. And yet a third time he took on an attitude of defiance, and, stretching out his right arm, said, "Mr. President, it strikes me—." Now his little wife was sitting over in the corner behind some other ladies, and when he came out for the third time with his "Mr. President, it strikes me,—" she leaned forward and said very quietly, "dumb, George." Instantly he turned and looked at her, his fierce face breaking into a smile, as he said, "My dear, you are quite right, it strikes me dumb,"—and down he sat; and this was my cousin George's speech. I have often thought I inherited some of my cousin George's talent for public speaking, for whenever I have been called upon, no matter how full I thought I was of ideas upon the subject,—a very ocean of impending eloquence,—a rapidly receding wave swept all away, leaving me (intellectually) a stranded wreck, and as dumb as my poor cousin.

On the evenings of debate, the company always adjourned to the dining-room, where a supper of cold turkey, ham, etc., was washed down with good old Madeira.

And the women,—the matrons and the maids of that time,—their soft voices and their gentle ways! They did not belong to women's clubs, they did not ride bicycles and horses astride, and they did not drive automobiles or lecture on platforms. They were brought up without coming in contact with the rude outer world; they were generally educated at home by governesses. Every girl had her maid, who waited on her, and she was a stranger to drudgery. One would suppose from this that they would be useless toys as wives, and poor companions for educated and stirring men, but the supposition would be wrong.

I have seen a girl of thirteen take the head of her father's table, in her mother's absence, and play hostess in such a simple and sweet fashion as would charm her father's guests. She had watched her mother in these trying ordeals, and had insensibly learned her lesson, and when it came her turn to preside at

her husband's table and take upon herself the cares of a family, she had little to learn! And when the great Civil War came, with what splendid heroism she stood at her post at home, and sent her husband and her sons to battle! And when the struggle was ended, with what uncomplaining cheerfulness she undertook the drudgeries of her altered circumstances! These are not merely the tales of a fond old man, revelling in the visions of his youth; they are parts of the immortal history of the Southland.

Upon these people living peacefully and happily in that beautiful valley, the Brown Raid came in October, 1859, as a clap of thunder from a clear sky.

#### THE JOHN BROWN RAID

There is a turnpike road from Harper's Ferry southwestward through Charlestown eight miles, thence twelve miles to Berryville, and thence ten miles to Winchester. It is a macadamized road, and was, during the war, the main road for both armies in their many marches up and down the Valley of Virginia. At the time of the Raid I was living on a farm six miles southwest from Charlestown, and therefore fourteen miles from Harper's Ferry, on this turnpike road.

On the Monday morning of the 20th of October, 1859, I was overlooking the work of the men, who were cutting off corn in a field near Ripon, our post office station. I noticed that the men often turned their eyes on me as I followed behind them in their work,—a thing I had never observed in them before. Their glances were stolen glances, and made me feel uncomfortable and doubtful,—an entirely new sensation in my experience as a slave owner. The post office, where the stage to Berryville stopped to deliver the mail, was in sight. A negro boy passed up the path leading across the field to the post office at Ripon about two o'clock. It was his daily task to go for the mail at this hour. He soon returned, swinging the empty mail bag and reported, "there is no mail." Accustomed to having the daily paper at least, I walked immediately to Ripon and there heard the news of the Raid, much exaggerated, of course, but still presenting the main facts.

Harper's Ferry had been invaded the night before (Sunday

night) by a band of armed man, who had arrested some citizens, and killed several, and now held possession of the town and of all the trains on the B. & O. Railroad. Among the dead were my neighbor, George W. Turner (a retired army officer), F. Breakham (the agent of the railroad), and Heyward, a negro porter at the railway station. How many men composed the party of raiders was not known. They had crossed the river from the Maryland side about nine o'clock Sunday night. Sentinels were posted at the street corners, and all citizens on the street were told to go home and remain in their houses. The churches let out their congregations at this hour, and for a time the streets were filled with people, but these soon disappeared under the advice of the raiders; a few who refused were arrested. The men wore short cloaks or blankets, under which they concealed the short Sharp's rifles with which they were armed.

During the night, a party under Brown in person made a raid into the country and arrested Lewis W. Washington and John H. Allstandt and brought them to Harper's Ferry. Brown also armed himself with the sword of General Washington and carried away other relics of the "father of his country." But the reign of John Brown's party was of short duration. The wires were busy during the night, and in the morning Harper's Ferry was invested by military companies from Charlestown, Winchester, Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, and Frederick, and Brown was soon forced to take refuge in the engine house in the U. S. armory yard, taking his prisoners as hostages with him.

Everybody seemed to have heard of these things except me, who had remained at home all that Monday and had seen nobody and heard nothing.

I returned home, passing through the field where my men were at work, and observed that their covert glances were more frequent and more eager, and I now knew well the cause. It was a well-known fact that the negroes had some means of getting news which white people did not have, and I was sure my men knew as much about the Raid and more, probably, than I did. In fact it was ascertained afterwards that John Brown's emissaries in the shape of peddlers, book agents, etc., etc., had been among the negroes for a year past, and had acquainted

them with his plan, even the day he would take Harper's Ferry. Brown told me in the jail at Charlestown that he looked for at least five hundred slaves to join him at Harper's Ferry, that his army would be five thousand in a few days, and that he would have one hundred thousand in a month, all armed with Harper's Ferry rifles he had captured, and that then five million slaves being in revolt, the whites would be at their mercy. I saw him several times in the jail, and he talked quite freely to me and Colonel Lawson Botts, my brother-in-law, who was assigned by the judge for the defence.

Leaving the field, I went to the house and ordered my saddle horse and my wife's carriage. I told my wife nothing of the Raid, but asked her if she did not wish to take the children to her mother's for the night, as I would be absent on business. She was always glad to do this, and started as soon as she could get ready. As soon she was out of sight, I took my rifle and mounted my horse and started for Harper's Ferry.

Within the first mile, I met an old darky who said, "Marster, I see you is off for de war; Marse John done put on his war clothes and he's gone." Marse John was a militia colonel and I found enough colonels and generals at Harper's Ferry to capture Brown's party without their commands.

Arriving at Harper's Ferry about nine at night, I found everything quiet, the streets filled with soldiers, but no fighting. John Brown was said to be cooped up in the engine house, and pickets were posted to prevent approach to that centre, but no one could tell me what was going to be done. Learning, however, that Col. Robert E. Lee had arrived and was in command, I went at once to his quarters. I had known Colonel Lee, for when a boy I was at school with Custis Lee, his son; and sending in my name, was admitted. The room was filled with militia and a council of war was being held. Colonel Lee asked their advice, from the junior to the senior officer, but no one seemed to know what to do. They had driven Brown into the engine house, where he was protected by strong brick walls with an occasional brick knocked out as a "port hole," and none of them knew how to get him out. They could batter down the walls with cannon, but in doing so would sacrifice Brown's prisoners.

Finally Colonel Lee said, "Gentlemen, I will now bid you good-night; to-morrow morning at eight o'clock I will storm the engine house with a detachment of marines under Lieut. Israel Green." Going out into the street, I met a few of my old friends who had been cadets with me, and let them into the secret. We went to the hotel on the railroad, which faced the engine house, and took a room overlooking the scene of the impending conflict. The windows of the room opened on the roof of a porch facing the engine house and not more than twenty yards distant, and we had a perfect view of the whole performance.

The next morning, at a few minutes before eight o'clock, Colonel Lee appeared in the street below, and we immediately passed through the windows onto the porch roof. We were in full view, and if Brown had not had his hands so full, his men could have quickly routed us. Colonel Lee was dressed very quietly: felt hat with cord and tassel, a short blue cape braided in black, and carried under his arm his sword in its scabbard, the whole encased in a buckskin cover. He walked slowly towards the engine house and took his stand behind one of the stone pillars of the gateway of the armory yard, and I thought then, as I have often thought since, when following him through a four-years' war, that certainly there could be no finer type of soldier than he.

Capt. J. E. B. Stuart now approached the engine house bearing a flag of truce, a white handkerchief on the point of his drawn sword. After a short colloquy with Brown through the doors, he retired and dropped his white flag as a signal for attack.

Very soon a squad of marines advanced from the railroad at double quick, and tried to batter down the doors of the engine house with sledge hammers, but Brown had stayed the doors with chains across them and had pushed up the fire engine against them, and the sledge hammers merely split the planks without breaking down the doors. The sledge-hammer squad retired, and soon twenty marines, carrying a long ladder on their shoulders, ran rapidly towards the doors, using the ladder as a battering ram, and after two attempts, the doors gave way, the ladder crashing through them and reamining in a slanting po-



sition, about ten feet of the forward end remaining inside and resting on the engine, the near end resting on the ground, offering easy access to the engine house. Immediately an officer (some say Israel Green, some Jeb Stuart, but both of them were on the ladder at the same time) sprang upon the ladder, followed by the marines (one of whom was shot as he entered and died), and in a few minutes Brown and his party were prisoners. But Brown and his party had made a desperate fight, had fired through the port holes and through the doors incessantly, and though two of them were lying dead in the engine house, the living were perfectly cool and undaunted to the end. Colonel Washington emerged from his prison-house looking as well dressed as usual, and seemed as cool as if nothing had happened. He said he would like some breakfast. The other prisoners were uninjured, having only suffered the discomfort of a day and a night in the engine house. Brown had a scalp wound at the hands of Captain Stuart, I believe; two of Brown's men were lying dead in the engine house; one was lying dead on a rock in the middle of the Potomac; one named Stephens was severely wounded, and the rest (excepting a man named Cook, who escaped early in the morning before Brown was driven into the engine house, but was subsequently captured in Pennsylvania and brought back to the Charlestown jail) were all taken to Charlestown and lodged in jail.

The scene now changes to Charlestown, where the prisoners were already lodged in jail.

Charlestown, the county-seat of Jefferson County, was founded in 1786 and named after Colonel Charles Washington, a brother of General George Washington. He owned nearly all the land in the vicinity, and eighty acres were laid out in lots and streets as Charles Town. The original trustees were John Augustine Washington, William Drake, Robert Rutherford (great grandfather of the writer), James Crane, Cato Moore, Magness Tate, Benjamin Rankin, Thornton Washington, William Little, Alexander White, and Richard Ranson. The people of the county bore such names as the Washingtons (several families), the Lees, Davenports, Danridges, Pendletons, Turners, Lewises, Whitings, and Lowndes; while in Clarke, the adjoining county, were the

Randolphs, the Pages, the Meads, the Carters, the Nelsons, Lewises, etc., etc.,—old Virginia names and well known in her history. General hospitality was the rule among all the people, and an opportunity was now presented to them for a boundless exercise of this trait.

Almost every organized and armed body of men in the State was present, and Charlestown became a military camp. Batteries of artillery were stationed on the outskirts. Cavalrymen patrolled the whole county and especially the northern border, thousands of infantry were camped in and around the town, and the sleepy little village awoke to the sights and sounds of war.

Rumors were afloat of a rising of John Brown's friends in the North, that they were approaching the town in large bodies with the intention of rescuing him, and apprehension and excitement pervaded the whole community. Cavalry scouts increased their activity and vigilance; artillery was so placed as to sweep by its fire all the approaches, the infantry was often kept under arms all night. But nothing came of the rumors; excitement died down gradually, and confidence was again restored.

The militia was composed of the flower of Virginia families and were received and entertained in old Virginia fashion. Among the young the tragic side of the Raid was soon forgotten in a round of gaiety very unusual and very exciting. All houses in the town and county were thrown open to the soldiers, and dinners, suppers, balls and parties seemed to be the main occupation of everybody. It was a repetition of Brussels before Waterloo, when—

"Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,  
And all went merry as a marriage-bell."

All this, however, was among the young. Old men looked grave and shook their heads, and middle-aged faces had traces of care and thought. Military companies were forming everywhere. They were being uniformed, armed, and drilled. The Second Virginia Infantry was formed at this time, composed of companies from Charlestown, Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, Berryville, and Harper's Ferry. The field officers and some of the captains of companies were old cadet graduates of the Virginia Military Institute, and the writer was Adjutant. The

same thing was going on in a less degree all over the State, and preparations for war were being made, although in a superficial and utterly inadequate way. The truth is, people feared war but did not believe in it, and consequently when war did come, were entirely unprepared for it.

In the meantime, John Brown's men were recovering from their wounds and were speedily brought to trial. Able defenders did all they could for them before the juries,—the late Senator Vorhees of Indiana being of Brown's counsel, but they were all found guilty, condemned, and hanged.

After sixty days of excitement such as they had never before experienced, the people went back to their farms and their merchandise and their apparently quiet life, but underneath there was an uncertainty and dread of the future which thinking people could not rid themselves of, and which was to be more than realized in one short year.

How many men Brown had with him in the Raid, I do not now remember, but I am sure there were not over nineteen in all. That he should have attempted so much with so small a force would argue that he was not of sound mind, but it seems he had worked out his proposition quite thoroughly in his own head, and on plausible if not practical lines. His theory was that the negroes in bondage were all thirsting for freedom and would gladly and instantly embrace the first opportunity which was presented them. He neglected to estimate the true character of the negro and the real conditions of his bondage. He did not know that while the negro was anxious to be free, yet from long dependence upon others, was not likely to act promptly and independently. He forgot that the negroes, in that section at least, were comfortable and happy, that there was such a thing as love between master and slave, that many negroes loved their homes and were proud of the families who owned them. As a consequence, not one slave joined him at Harper's Ferry, although they had ample notice of his coming. The negro Heyward refused positively to join him and was shot dead in consequence. This was a fatal error, for if his success had even been partial such an act would have prevented the slaves from joining him.

They would have regarded him as a cruel tyrant and not as a friend and deliverer.

For a year before the Raid, Brown and his men had been living on a mountain farm on the Maryland side of the Potomac, about a mile from Harper's Ferry. There he formed his plans and sent his emissaries through the South. Being so near, he acquainted himself with all the conditions at Harper's Ferry, the number and quality of the arms stored in the arsenal, etc., etc. There, on the farm, he made thousands of pikes with which to arm the ignorant slaves until he could teach them the use of firearms, and from there, on the day appointed, he marched at night into Harper's Ferry and took possession. The only thing wanting to what he would have esteemed success, was the rising of the slaves and flocking to his standard. He forgot that if even five hundred slaves had joined him at Harper's Ferry on the Sunday night, they would all have fallen victims to the troops which, armed, drilled, and disciplined, rushed by trains to Harper's Ferry on Monday morning. He forgot that, though he might have coped for awhile with the volunteer troops, the power of the U. S. Government and its army would have been on him in a day or two. His success in sparsely settled Kansas had turned his head, and he failed to estimate properly new conditions which awaited him in his venture in the East; and while the North must regard him as a philanthropist who gave his life for an idea, the South must regard him as a crazed and reckless freebooter. Even the poor ignorant slaves showed a better judgment of the situation than Brown. When the armies of the North came down in countless legions, the negro saw his opportunity and embraced it. When Brown came with his nineteen, they had sense enough to see the utter folly of his attempt and turned their backs upon him to a man.

When I got home after the war there was one able-bodied negro on the farm who had never left it. I asked him why he had not gone with the others, and he said, "I thought that if I was to be a slave I would rather be a slave here than anywhere else; and if I was to be free, I would rather be free here than anywhere else. I have a comfortable home, plenty to eat and

to wear, and am cared for when I am sick, and I don't see that any of those who went away have anything more, and some of them have much less." These are sound views and argue for the negro more sense than Brown gave him credit for. That negro is living in his cabin on that farm to this day.

In all that I have said upon the subject of slavery, it must not be understood that I have sought to justify or defend it. When I was a boy twelve years old, I made up my mind that slavery was wrong and I have never changed it. When I became a man, I found many who agreed with me and we were only waiting for some able mind to devise a scheme of emancipation. The negro was a knotty problem then and will remain a knotty problem for ages to come.

A. R. H. RANSON.

Catonsville, Maryland.



## CHATEAUBRIAND THE LOVER \*

"Chateaubriand! What pictures do not rise before us with this sonorous name? A magnificent series of attitudes and of costumes. A child-dreamer, in the thickets near an old castle. A young French officer among the red-skins, among the charming savage-women, in the virgin forest. A book that opens the church-doors and sets processions in motion. Moonlight, the indeterminate haze of the forest, the amber odor of crocodiles. A writer jealous of Napoleon's glory. A royalist who serves the king with the most disdainful loyalty. A deaf old man near the armchair of an old lady, beautiful and blind. A tomb in the rocks of the sea."

Thus does M. Jules Lemaitre open his most recent series of lectures: lectures that have set everyone in Paris to writing, talking, and thinking Chateaubriand. It is, as it happens, an even one hundred years since the *Genius of Christianity* was published; but M. Lemaitre had better reasons than that for choosing its author as the subject of his lectures. The personality is one of those about which men and women will always keep on arguing. It is by his faults fully as much as his virtues—and he has more than his share of both—that René infatuated his own generation and impresses ours.

### I.

If ever there was a figure in literary history who expressed his character in his love affairs, and whose love affairs explain his writings no less than his personality, here is the man. A lover of many women of his time, he was, in love as in his philosophy, an aristocrat, an idealist. In certifying this, we do not ascribe unselfishness to him, any more than, by a wild leap of imagination, virtue. A certain Spaniard once wrote, in the preface of his amatory poems: *Con tal que las costumbres de un autor sean puras y castras, importa muy poco no sean igualmente severas sus obras*,—for which we have Poe's translation as

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follows: "Provided the personal morals of an author are pure, it matters little what those of his books are." The author of *The Genius of Christianity* reversed the formula, in practice. But, though we know many incidents of his passional career (all we shall never know), we find him guilty of no ungallant indiscretion. The cynic's definition of pride—"that vanity which keeps one from performing low actions"—is more or less to the point. There is, therefore, small danger in his case of M. Léon Séché's publishing a volume of the letters he exchanged with fair women. He received enough: "How happy Chateaubriand was, in spite of the storms of his life!" M. Deschamps has exclaimed: "He was adored by all women, even his own." He received his share of love-letters—at times his postman staggered under the weight of these and his bills; but, after inhaling the perfume of the former, as the gods of Olympus once breathed the smoke of fat oxen, he destroyed them. True, he wrote to the woman who called herself his sister: "Rare privilege attaches to the friendship of genius, that of giving imperishable existence to all that it has loved"; and, more specifically: "In nursing the thought of writing my Memoirs, I feel the price which great men attach to the value of their names. There is perhaps a touching reality in this perpetuity of recollections that is left when one passes." Again he writes to this same Madame de Duras: "If I count for anything in the future, my friends shall have a beautiful and respectable name there." But if he meant to immortalize his friends, he meant to do so decorously; just as his plan in writing his Memoirs was, not to strip himself naked after the undignified manner of proletarian Rousseau, but to sing the man and his arms, while following the maxim: "One must present to the world only the beautiful." At any rate he did not keep his mistresses' love-letters, or let them run the risk of falling into the hands of our own prying generation. It was, rather, the women he loved who gloried unabashed, and if any confidences were preserved to posterity, they were his own—that had passed out of his hands. There are enough of these, in all truth; four hundred of them, of those addressed to one woman alone, Madame de Duras, have weathered nearly a century of hazards.

The significant text of the first chapter in the idealism of a master-lover is to be found in the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*:—

"I made up a woman," Chateaubriand tells us, "out of all the women that I have ever seen. This charmer followed me everywhere, being visible; I conversed with her as with a real person; she varied according to the height of my folly. . . . Pygmalion was less enamoured of his statue; the words I addressed to this woman would have kindled the senses of old age, and warmed the marble of tombs. All-ignorant, all-wise, at once a virgin and lover, an innocent Eve, a fallen Eve, the enchantress whence my folly sprang was a mingling of mystery and passion: I placed her on an altar and adored her. . . . I found at once, in my marvellous creation, all the blandishments of sense and the joys of soul; borne down upon me and as it were drowned in these double delights, I no longer knew what was my real existence; I was man and I was not; I became cloud, wind, sound; I was a pure spirit—Ariel singing sovereign felicity."<sup>1</sup>

Folly, says common sense; dementia, comments science; but glorious folly, at least, and an inspired dementia! Youth is only too prone to imagine amours; but youth's love-pictures are seldom such as genius stoops to paint. Chateaubriand is sublime in his madness; noble in his nympholepsy. And here is the parallel with his generous conduct in his actual amours, in spite of all his petulance; the parallel, too, with his distinction in the choice of his inamoratas. Sainte-Beuve, who nursed a cowardly grudge and jealousy of Chateaubriand, reproaches him with not having expressed in his *Memoirs* a tribute to that wild-woman of French literature, Hortense Allart de Méritens.<sup>2</sup> But there is a tremendous difference in taste between a Chateaubriand and a Sainte-Beuve. The former "had no chamber-maids."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the translation of Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, London, 1902, vol. I, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire*. See, on Hortense, the works of the indefatigable Léon Séché, and her own memoirs: *Des Enchantemens de Prudence*, signed "Madame de Saman."

<sup>3</sup> "Ce n'est pas à lui qu'on aurait pu reprocher de vulgaires amours. Il n'en a jamais eu d'ancillaires, ainsi qu'on en a attribué au plus considérable,

## II.

Great though his name is in French literary history—the greatest name and the greatest influence of the nineteenth century, says M. Giraud—his personality is another matter, and Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote in a letter to a friend of his youth: "Chateaubriand is more antipathetic to me than anyone else in the world."<sup>4</sup> It was the perpetual posturing of the Frenchman that repelled the Scot—or so one may suppose. Not that posturing was his sole offence; the Abbé Pailhès records (and scarcely blushes for his hero) how "he denied and equivocated, in affairs of the heart, without shame." On one night, "the Kings have kept me from writing to you," writes the Ambassador to his "sister"; while in a letter to Madame de Castellane, a big four-page letter to which, at midnight, he added a postscript half as long again: "My hand is tired, but not so my heart."<sup>5</sup> No, neither posturing alone, nor even posturing plus truthfulness, is the only ugliness which we confront in studying this man. His infidelities are notorious.

And his infidelities help to demonstrate that "the Charmer"—so his contemporaries named him—was altogether human. No mere man could have loved so many women as did Chateaubriand *without* being unfaithful. In one sense, he exemplified the poet's exhortation, "To thyself be true": for he was never true to anyone else. Doubtless he tried to be sincere in loving—but the new flame paled the dying ashes of the old. Some-

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mais au moins bienveillant de ses critiques."—Dr. Evariste Michel, *Chateaubriand: Interprétation Médico-Psychologique de son caractère* (Paris, 1911), p. 62. On the critic, see *Sainte-Beuve Amoureux et Poète*, by G. Michaut (Paris, 1911).

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson's knowledge of Chateaubriand was largely second-hand. He writes in the same letter (Avignon, 1873): "I have bought Sainte-Beuve's *Chateaubriand* and am immensely delighted with that critic."—*The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York, 1911), vol. I, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> See Pailhès, *La Duchesse de Duras et Chateaubriand* (Paris, 1910), p. 5. Chateaubriand must have admired this sentence, for on June 13, 1828, he used it in a letter to the Marquise de V—: "Ma main est si fatiguée que je puis à peine écrire, mais le cœur n'est pas las, et il est à vous."—Téodor Wyzewa, *Correspondance de Chateaubriand avec la Marquise de V—* (Paris, 1903), pp. 119, 120.

times, even, two flames burned, with seeming brilliance, at one moment. If Chateaubriand loved a woman of pure fantasy in youth, he loved all those women on whom she was, as it were, founded, before old age came upon him. Nor did he cease either to love or to inspire love when he was gray enough to have taken grandchildren on his knee. (He was spared children, even.) At sixty, according to Mme. de Méritens, "his Olympian visage and fine manners had kept the seductiveness of youth." When that lady first presented herself to him at Rome, he regretfully exclaimed: "Ah, if I had back my fifty years." "Why not wish for twenty-five," was her ardent reply. "No," rejoined the Ambassador; "fifty would do." And fifty *would* have done: as any woman who knew him at that age could have attested. In writing letters to any lady whom he had not yet met, and in writing about himself to the public (always a favorite recreation), Chateaubriand lamented his gray head and fullness of years: this, he confessed, was a ruse, for when the ladies came to meet him, they were agreeably surprised to find a troubadour less ancient than they expected—scarcely ancient at all, indeed. Sometimes this proved a source of positive embarrassment. Thus the Marquise de V——, after having carried on a correspondence with him from the provinces during eighteen months, a correspondence that ceased pretty soon after the two were brought face to face, confessed that he was "younger than she had believed, and appeared younger than he was", so that the memory of her letters obviously pained her.

If, in his decline, when he was writing letters to Madame Récamier (copying them, afterwards, into his famous *Memoirs*), letters lamenting that he returns to Italy, "deprived of his friends", letters confessing that "no one cares to live in a ruin"; if, when he was telling the Marquise de V——, "here I am at Rome, which means nothing to me", he attracted an Hortense, how irresistible must René not have been in his glorious youth! So irresistible, indeed, that it is doubtful if he often made the first advances. A look was enough; in most cases he was even spared the trouble of looking. Did not the sensible Madame de la Tour de Pin write to her friend Madame de Duras (all in



hoping to check the rising tide of the latter's love): "I find evidences here of unbelievable passions for him: women who have never even seen him who want a token, a line, a word in his handwriting." As to those who did not see him—but we shall come to that soon enough. "A tyrannical, spoiled child", Madame de Duras called him. Even that sadly neglected wife, whom he married on the eve of the Terror and proceeded to forget for a dozen years, felt his charm and proved her own devotion. In England, during the Emigration, the black-eyed daughter of a prosperous English clergyman fell in love with him (he gave her excuse enough); and the mother herself offered her in marriage to the impecunious young Frenchman. René was indeed a charmer—in spite of (or because of) being the first among his own admirers. "If I have not been spoiled, it must be because my nature is good", the author modestly confesses in his *Memoirs*. Whereas most writers must await the burial of two generations before their genius is fully recognized—their schoolmaster's generation and their schoolmates—Chateaubriand's fame was as immediate as Byron's. Writer and works coöperated in the winning of women. "The style of M. de Chateaubriand makes me feel a kind of shiver of love; it plays the clavichord on all my fibres", one of the victims averred. Then twilight came and he was no longer young, the melancholy of his face and manner, no less than his grace, still cast a spell. An Englishwoman whom he met face to face at Rome looked into his eyes, and said—without an introduction: "Monsieur de Chateaubriand, you are very unhappy."

Had he followed up this encounter, doubtless there would have been still another romance to record!

### III.

In the last analysis, it is impossible to separate the personality and the literary work of Chateaubriand. "The fact is," says Prescott, "History and Romance are too near akin to ever be lawfully united";—but in Chateaubriand's case they are actually one and the same. Indeed, it is a question whether, in his quality as poet, he ever conceived a heroine or set her in action but that he represented in her one whom he had loved. Critics have

professed to recognize, in the Céluta and the Amélie of his American novels—yes, and even in the Velléda of the *Martyrs*—his unfortunate sister, Lucile; the daughter of the priest of Homer, in *Les Martyrs*, “Cymodocée aux beaux bras,” Cymodocée, *cet astre charmant*, “rose in the poet’s imagination,” M. Le Braz has written, “not from the clear horizons of Hellenic Arcady, but from the ‘confused and vapoury’ distance of Arcadian Bungay”; the Blanca of the *Dernier des Abencerages* is none other than Nathalie de la Borde, Duchesse de Mouchy; she whom he hastened to meet at the Fountain of Lions in the Alhambra at the end of his pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre<sup>6</sup> and its incidental tour through the oriental lands bordering on the Mediterranean (see the *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*): she who wearied of his delay in arriving, and met a French officer at Grenada “while her impatience was at its height”, so that the spiteful Madame de Boigne could write:—

“When M. de Chateaubriand arrived, full of excuses for his delay, and panegyrics upon the punctuality of his beloved, he found a woman in deepest mourning, bitterly bewailing the death of a rival who had been successful in his absence.”

That his literature and his private romances are inseparable, must be the excuse of those who write more of the man than of his books. The work is the apotheosis of the personality. This is true even of the apologetics, including the *Genius of Christianity*. Such was, indeed, his theory. In the work just named, “the finest things an author can put into a book”, he said, “are the sentences which come to him in reminiscence, of the first days of his youth.” Again, in his *Memoirs*: “We are persuaded that the great writers have put their own history into their works. One can paint well only his heart, ascribing it to another. The best part of genius consists in recollection.” On another page: “My works are the materials and justificative doc-

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<sup>6</sup> This end of the pilgrimage may be taken as a diverting bit of humor, or more seriously, as a significant fact from the standpoint of the literary critic. To it Sainte-Beuve ties his theory of Chateaubriand as the great decadent of French Literature. See *Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire* (éd. nouvelle), vol. I, p. 103.

umentation of my memoirs; their history is bound up in mine in such a manner that one can scarcely separate them."<sup>1</sup> And the composition of these all-significant memoirs was Chateaubriand's dearest occupation. When he began them he was thirty-five; he wrote and rewrote until the shadow of death fell across the page. Thus the great rhetorician would in no wise have taken offence had he known that critics of our generation place the *Memoirs* above his novels and historical essays; even above his famous apologetic. Of the three great themes which inspired his finest passages—Nature, the Christian religion, and himself—the last theme proved the most inspiring.<sup>2</sup>

Chateaubriand asks, in his *Memoirs*, "Why did I continue to write?" He had published his atheistical *Essai sur les Révolutions*, and his sister, Madame de Farcy, had written in announcing the death of his mother: "If you knew how many tears your errors have caused our venerable mother to shed!" The writer was plunged into distress, "until the thought occurred to him to expiate his first book by means of a religious work": this was the origin of the *Genius of Christianity*. "I wept and believed."

So that even the *Genius of Christianity* had a personal origin, and in vain do skeptics to-day deny that origin.<sup>3</sup> It is an expression of the writer's personality much more than it is a work of erudition. It is less a theological essay than the poem of the sentimental motives which disposed Chateaubriand to leave off incredulity—if we may paraphrase one of his biographers. And thus we discover something of the force, the beauty, of the *Génie*; also something of the limitations. Yet those who have

<sup>1</sup> *Essai sur les Révolutions*, edition of 1826, vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> In the introduction to his English translation of the *Mémoires*, M. Alexander Teixeira de Mattos reports a conversation with M. Pierre Louÿs, author of *Aphrodite* and other exotic novels, on the terrace of a Paris café. "Is there any nineteenth-century French writer at all whom you others read nowadays and approve of?" asked the former. "Yes," said Louÿs, "Chateaubriand." "The novels?" inquired M. de Mattos. "Ah, no, *The Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. That—that is monumental; that will live forever."

<sup>3</sup> See *La vie politique de François de Chateaubriand*, t. I., by Albert Casagagne (Paris, 1911), and the review of this work by M. Victor Giraud in the *Deux Mondes* of July, 15, 1912 (especially pp. 320 ff.).

criticized the work have said nothing, in the century and more elapsed since the sensation of its publication, that Joubert did not hint at, or at least conceive, before the book was so much as published. "What he must do," wrote this shrewd adviser, "is to cut loose from Rousseau and Ossian and the fogs of the Thames, from revolutions ancient and modern, and confine himself to the missions, sunsets in mid-ocean, the savanas of America,—and then you will see what a poet we shall have to purify the relics of the Directory, as Epaminondas, with his sacred rites and verses, purified Athens after the plague." To Pauline de Beaumont Joubert wrote: "Our friend is not a pipe, like most of us, but a spring; and I want all to jet out from himself." "Bossuet cited, but he cited from the pulpit", he added. And though Chateaubriand wrote more books than Joubert approved of, he profited largely from the counsel he received from the friend—just as he did by the assistance of Madame de Beaumont, who analyzed for him *Lettres édifiantes* and a certain History of the Noaks, not without complaining of their aridity.

Some pious folks have shuddered at the thought that the *Genius of Christianity* was written by a young man visiting an unchaperoned divorcée at a little country house only too appropriate for a honeymoon: but to anyone who has really studied the book, or the genius who wrote it, this circumstance seems, not natural alone, but peculiarly fitting. Also, "one must not be too much astonished if, in the circumstances, the author used less of pure theology and hidebound apologetic than of fervor and sentimental piety." In pleading for the tender religion of the cross, for the poetry of its wars and the romance of its traditions, this writer had for amanuensis a charming and devoted woman, "interestingly" delicate, melancholy, and yet avid of pleasure. It is a fact, however, that in the *Memoirs* there is little to suggest Madame de Beaumont's part in the undertaking. As if to lead us off on a false scent, Chateaubriand harks back to an English amour: that which he conducted while the *Essai sur les Révolutions* and *les Natchez* were on the carpet. "The memory of Charlotte penetrated and warmed it", he writes of his work—and was, perhaps, sincere. After all, it is only a question of which love-affair "warmed" a masterpiece of Chris-

tian eloquence. Perhaps the Goncourts had Chateaubriand in mind when they wrote: "Rarely indeed does a writer who puts morality into his books draw it from his own life." The "Genius", however, is not primarily concerned with morality.

## IV.

Chateaubriand the husband is "another story", for which ample materials exist. Here, however, Madame de Chateaubriand cannot figure any more conspicuously than she did in the first twelve years of her married life. Enough that the Breton heiress was, in the main, appreciative of her blessings—such as they were; and saved by a sense of humor as also by a strong practical and an equally strong religious sense, from letting René's infidelities too deeply poison her life. Not only am I silent in respect to Madame de Chateaubriand, but also to the beautiful and enigmatic Madame Récamier—who would have all the world regard René's long devotion as pure friendship. But even in the twilight of his protracted and eventful career, Chateaubriand was not exactly faithful to these two—wife and friend; for at fifty-five, he addressed himself to a "Madame de C."—whom we know to-day for the soon-forgotten Comtesse Boni de Castellane. Chateaubriand was, on the whole, fairly punished for his sins; the stilted and melancholy letters of the Marquise de V——, it can have been no pleasure to receive, once the novelty of her homage and vapors wore off. More serious was the loss of so many mistresses by death, one after the other. And melancholy was the end of the chapter—yet was it not as good an ending as any romance of real life may well have? For the aged Emperor of Letters, whose authority was no longer altogether unquestioned, was helped by a servant to enter the salon of the Empress-Dowager of Beauty—and they sat there in the Abbaye-aux-Bois where she had taken her retreat, in the dusk; she growing blinder day by day, and he deafer and deafer, until at last there was no communication between them—only a community of memory and a communion of sentiment. Jealousy no longer troubled Juliette's heart, nor did René exhaust himself any more with trying to love two exacting women (or three) at one time. Peace was come—and



Juliette taught the impatient René the art of growing old gracefully.<sup>10</sup> She was an adept in this, as in all things.

Madame Récamier was chiefly an adept, however, in the difficult feat of retaining as friends the men who fell in love with her. This is seldom compassed. Yet this, precisely, is one of her glories. It is remembered to-day, when her beauty and grace are become faint memories, no more than hinted at in the portraits which we have of her. René was in his way as exceptional as was Juliette. In spite of his infidelity to his wife, he never ceased to hold her in deep respect, and when he had come to know her, a measure of affection; in spite of his infidelity to each one of his mistresses, he was, after his fashion, ever loyal in his friendship to those who had good cause to reproach him for betrayals in love. The common order of man flings far away the passion that is cooling—or a woman who has ceased to be *the* woman. Not so René. He tried, indeed, to be all things to all the really exceptional women whose paths crossed his. That, even more than his literary and diplomatic efforts, is his distinction.

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<sup>10</sup> There is a spiteful page of Sainte-Beuve's masterly study (ed. cited, vol. I, p. 104) wherein he describes what he calls the "profane and pagan element" in René's character—an element which is of course quite obvious. "Those who knew him," writes the disagreeable critic, "know that he could never console himself for growing old, that he never consented to it; he simply took old age as an affront, and no one has so loudly bewailed his lost youth. In this respect he was like one of those kings of Asia who, in anger, tore their garments." Forgetting the poet of the Greek anthology, "If our fathers, too, regretted growing old," he continues, "how lightly they did it! *Ah! que vous m'ennuyez, Vieillesse!*" sighed Charles d'Orléans in a gracious rondeau. And it was lamented in a low key up to Voltaire's time." (See his *Désagrémens de la Vieillesse*.) No one since Chateaubriand's reign has so bitterly protested against the inroads of time as has Guy de Maupassant. Read, above all, his *Fort comme la Mort*. Loti, who is, in so many respects, a *fil de René*, writes in his charming *Roman d'un Enfant*: "Unlike all other children—unlike those of to-day, above all—in such haste to become little men, I already had (at fourteen) that terror of growing up which was so much heightened, a little later; I even said so, I wrote it, and when I was asked why, I replied, not knowing how to give a better explanation; 'it seems to me that I shall be so bored, when I am big!' [*Il me semble que je m'ennuierai tant, quand je serai grand*]. I believe that mine was an extremely singular case, perhaps unique" (pages 97-98). But Chateaubriand had written in his *Memoirs*: "I believe that I was bored as I lay in my mother's womb." Chateaubriand had a good start even on so notable an heir as Loti.

## V.

*Il y avoit dans René quelque chose de dominateur, qui s'emparoit fortement de l'âme.* So writes Chateaubriand of one of his heroes; and his hero is invariably a projection of self: even as he draws, in his heroines, idealized or exaggerated portraits of the women he loved. "To love and to suffer was the double fatality that he imposed upon whosoever approached his person. Cast into the world like a great misfortune, his pernicious influence was communicated to those about him. It is thus that there are trees, beautiful to the eye, to breathe whose air or to enjoy whose shade is death." So René, writing of René.<sup>11</sup> One of his victims wrote to him: "For fifteen years I have preferred that which was *you* to that which was *me*; your interests and your affairs took precedence a thousand times over mine; and all that, naturally, without any credit attaching to me."<sup>12</sup> "I believe that you have sent me your *mal*," wrote another hysterical woman, with less right to complain.<sup>13</sup> "All whom I have loved," Chateaubriand wrote to Madame de Duras, "all whose society I have enjoyed, have gone mad. I myself shall end that way." He was wrong, writes the psychologist whose work I have already cited: he never drove anyone mad or inoculated them with a mysterious germ. In the case of his favorite sister, Lucile, who went mad altogether, having, Sainte-Beuve expressed it, "practised what René preached",—her madness was but an accentuation of his own. Even in the case of others, those whom he loved, but not as sisters, we may acquit Chateaubriand of all responsibility. Only, "his predelections bore him towards persons prepared, like himself, for accesses of madness, . . . in virtue of a law of social preservation that brings about, in time, extinction. . . . The mad love the mad."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Les Natchez*, éd. Pourrat (Paris, 1836), t. I, p. 208.

<sup>12</sup> Pailhès, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Correspondance de Chateaubriand avec la Marquise de V*—, p. 139.

<sup>14</sup> Michel, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-124. The psychologist quotes the eminent Dr. Blanche, who testifies to "the strange affinity which seems to draw together families tainted with mental alienation, which circumstance I have often had occasion to observe."

I do not know if the psychological knowledge deployed is sound or merely pretentious. I only know that Chateaubriand was himself a partaker of a morbid heredity with those sisters, several of whom went mad, whose parents were eccentric enough to furnish excellent pages of the great Memoirs; I only know that of the women whom Chateaubriand loved several, at least, were living problems in what is so unpleasantly termed morbid psychology. More than one of them, as Dr. Michel notes, had suffered greatly by the Revolution, as had Chateaubriand himself. Of the sufferers Madame de Beaumont was the most striking example: she who asked herself constantly, "Why haven't I the courage to die?"<sup>15</sup> Then there is Madame de Custine: who, in 1793, had been a helpless witness to the September massacres; who saw her husband and father-in-law pass to the guillotine.<sup>16</sup> Thereafter she was a hypochondriac; her son, Astolphe de Custine, went farther than she in this direction, in spite of all his talent. Nathalie, the fair Duchesse de Mouchy,—though Chateaubriand's friend, Hyde Neuville, sometime Minister of France at Washington, described her as "a most noble and generous soul"—was not free from dementia. Like Chateaubriand's sister, Lucile, like Rousseau, father of French romanticism, she ended by thinking herself a victim of persecution. "Her madness is not violent, but it is heartbreaking", wrote Madame de Duras of this unfortunate. "Terror seizes her; she believes that she is going to be assassinated; that everything she eats is poisoned; that we are all going to perish as the result of conspiracy, but that she in especial is the victim of it; that all her servants are assassins in disguise: in sum, a thousand follies. . . . She has charged me to justify her after death, and to say *she has not merited* the abandonment into which she has been betrayed."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> First of all, Madame de Beaumont was unhappy in love, but was released by divorce. Her father was murdered in prison; her mother and her brother went to the scaffold; she herself narrowly avoided it. But she had, as M. A. Bardoux writes in his study of this woman (*La Comtesse Pauline de Beaumont*, Paris, 1893), "a constant disgust with life."

<sup>16</sup> See the newly published *Mémoires of Delphine de Sabran, Marquise de Custine*, from the French of G. Maugras and le Comte P. Croze-Lemercier, (New York, 1912), pp. 106 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted by A. Beaunier: *Trois Amies de Chateaubriand* (Paris, 1911).

It is a question whether Madame de Duras herself was not more than eccentric—and our doubts thicken when we read her novels, obviously more or less autobiographical. Hortense Allart de Méritens, beloved (more or less) by all the romantics, was at least a *déséquilibrée*—and so was the Marquise. One has the sentiment, in reviewing the list, of inspecting a private sanitarium. And if frequent love affairs distracted Chateaubriand from his endless ennui—*ce monstre délicat*—their conclusion was not enlivening. As for Chateaubriand himself, in spite of his tendency toward insanity, manifested in youth by more or less frequent thought on self-destruction, in spite of his contradictions of character, we must not think of his ‘taint’ as occasioning, even as evoking, his genius. Yet the associations of madness and of nineteenth century romanticism are no less striking than those of madness and the mistresses of this great romanticist. There has ever been difficulty in defining the term “Romanticism”. I do not propose ‘madness’ as a synonym, yet if madness was not “the malady of the century” about which the doctors of philosophy have prated, is it not at least one of the century’s ‘*mals*’: one of the penalties of setting the individual too high above society, one of the heavy payments demanded in return for restless indulgence and mock freedom?

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## IN THE WORKSHOPS OF THE POETS

There is a fascination for all of us in watching creative work, in seeing that which was not gradually emerge into being. Even the carpenter and the smith at their labor attract older eyes than those of children. Similar but greater is the pleasure with which we watch, in such fragmentary glimpses as we can get, the poet's mind in its own workshop. The interest obtainable from such study is our only excuse for this essay. We are not attempting to deduce from the lives of past writers rules by which the present aspirant can equal them: on the contrary, if we say anything new, we shall only help to prove that no such rules can be found. At every turn we find great poets differing from each other in all respects except success. But if our readers have not yet fallen victims to the love of organization, that true *dementia Americana*, if they still enjoy an occasional voyage to fairylands yet uninvaded by the demon of system, lands where humanity is unmechanically alive and inconsistently sublime,—then they may be willing to pause awhile and watch the great master-builders at work.

Few phases of this question stir our imagination more than that of the poet's abandoned themes. We are too apt to think that a genius's every plan matured and came down to us; or if it did not mature it was worthless. On the contrary, through the brain of almost every great poet there have floated conceptions which he longed to make alive, which he sometimes kept treasured by him for years, but which he never embodied in language. Often these very subjects have been shaped into the masterpieces of later men. Milton, as we learn from his minor poems, long contemplated writing an epic on King Arthur, two centuries before Tennyson's *Idylls*. And Scott reminds us that—

“Dryden in immortal strain  
Had raised the Table Round again,  
But that a ribald king and court  
Bade him toil on to make them sport.”

At the time that Shelley was meditating his *Prometheus Unbound*, two other subjects for lyrical dramas were fermenting in



his mind. "One of these", says his wife, "was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of the song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the Book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers." These instances are far more typical than most people suppose. The past of literature is full of such unembodied conceptions floating around in the heads of successive poets, a Mormons picture the souls of future generations crying to be born. They hover dim and shapeless in the limbo of the might have been; but their formlessness only fires our imagination the more. They bring before our mind's eye the creator in the midst of his achievement, surrounded with—

"Thoughts in attitudes imperious,  
Voices soft and deep and serious,  
Words that whispered, tones that haunted."

Like these unrealized visions and yet unlike them are the poems which have been left unfinished. Some of these were cut short by death; but in the case of a greater number it was the mood in which they were conceived that died, and never could be recalled. Famous cases of this kind are "The Squire's Tale" of Chaucer, and "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" of Coleridge. Sometimes the authors have attempted to recapture the effervescent vision; but like Nebuchadnezzar's dream, it has gone from them. No one, unless he has read widely in English literature, realizes how much of it has been left incomplete or how impossible it often is for a great poet to finish his own Aladdin's window. Less suggestive to our imagination but equally instructive are instances where a poem has been left unfinished, not because the author is unable to regain a particular moment of rapture, but because his mind and taste have changed, fixing an unsympathetic gulf between the present man and his incompleted past. Such is Gray's *Alliance of Education and Government*. It was begun when its author still sympathized with the artificial standards of eighteenth century poetry. It was left forever a fragment as its writer gradually drifted farther and farther away from eighteenth century ideals. His friends urged him to complete it, but he replied that he could not. Then too we find many stray passages that seem to have served as

preliminary studies for greater works, or cancelled passages scattered around like a sculptor's chips. In my copy of Shelley's poems alone there are over seventy fragmentary bits of verse of one kind or another, which his admirers thought worth preserving. How much was destroyed, no one knows.

We come now to the field in which the widest differences exist between man and man. Most people know that in sheer bulk of output authors vary considerably; but few realize how great those variations are and how absolutely they fail to have any relation to the poet's merit. Browning, who is one of our foremost writers, and Bulwer, Lord Lytton, who is a mere cipher in rhyme and remembered only for his novels, both filled great tomes with verse. Poe, one of the foremost American poets, and James Beattie, an almost forgotten singer of the late eighteenth century, both wrote very little. These lawless variations become the more striking when we take into consideration the length of the poets' lives. Chatterton, "the marvelous boy," dying at seventeen, left about six times as many lines of poetry as William Collins, whose mind collapsed when he was thirty-four. Keats, cut off when he was only twenty-six, has left five times as much verse as Gray, who lived more than twice as long.

If we turn from mere bulk to the closely related question of rapidity of workmanship, we find differences still greater, and still less serving in any way as an index of ability. Shelley wrote his "Witch of Atlas", a fine poem and over six hundred lines long, in three days. Gray is supposed to have spent nearly eight years on the one hundred and twenty-eight lines of his *Elegy*. Burns is reported, though on the strength of a very uncertain tradition, to have written "Tam O'Shanter" in one day. His countryman Thomson, the author of "The Seasons", spent nearly seventeen years on the "Castle of Indolence". And yet all of these poems rank high. In the same way the failures of literature include works that have been labored over for years as well as the stray effusions of a moment. Nor are these contrasts wholly matters of personal idiosyncrasy. We find the same man turning off good and bad verse rapidly with ease, and again producing both good and bad verse slowly and with toil. Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey", "Hartleap Well" and "Idiot,

Boy", were thrown off almost extemporaneously; the two first of these are admirable; the last is—what it is. It was of "The Idiot Boy" that Byron wrote his savage couplet:—

"All who view the 'idiot in his glory'  
Conceive the bard the hero of the story."

Nevertheless that same Wordsworth who consumed over two years on his great "Ode to Immortality" said of "Laodamia", "It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written"; and, according to Shelley,—

"Was nineteen years considering and retouching 'Peter Bell.'"

Yet here again the first two poems are great; the last was long an object of ridicule, even among the poet's admirers. It is obvious, not only that every writer has his own way of working, but also that each individual poem, almost, has its own way of coming into being.

It is a common saying that practice makes perfect, and many persons consider this dictum as applying universally to all workmen, including poets. It is a common theory that all poets improve rapidly and steadily from youth to middle life, and that after this time their intellectual vision broadens still but their emotional warmth decreases, so that their work as a whole declines. Unquestionably something like this is often true. It was true, within reasonable limits, of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Tennyson. Keats improved marvelously between eighteen and twenty-four. But if this rule is not, like most rules deduced from literary history, ninety-nine per cent exceptions, yet it is far from universally sound. Wordsworth may have grown in sheer intellect, but as a poet he changed little and developed less during the half century between the publication of *The Lyrical Ballads* and his death. Browning's work improved in some ways under the loving and discerning tutelage of his wife, but corresponds not at all to the beautiful curve of theory. Scott's first long poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel", is considered by some his best; and beyond question his last poems betray a distinct falling off, although he wrote them before he was forty-five, in the very prime of mental and physical vigor. The genius of Coleridge blazed up and died down before he was thirty;

and for a third of a century after that his muse had to warm her hands as best she could over the smouldering coals in the ashes. If this law of systematic development is unreliable, still more so is the corollary too often drawn that precocity is in any way an index of ultimate power. Bryant wrote his "Thanatopsis" at eighteen, and lived to be eighty-four without surpassing it. The verse written by Chatterton in his teens is better than that written by Tennyson at the same age, and we have good reason for believing that it is better than that written by Shakespeare at the same age; yet it is doubtful if he could ever have become a Tennyson, and certain that he could never have become a Shakespeare. Great souls refuse to develop all alike and in regular seasons like wheat-fields and sugar maples. Some reach their highest in early youth, like Bryant, some move slowly at first, then by great leaps like Keats; some progress steadily up the long slope, like Tennyson; some blaze out spasmodically, like Coleridge;—

"And God fulfills Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Skilled workmen and specialists value highly the opinions of their fellow professionals. Reasoning by analogy, the uninitiated are apt to suppose that contemporary poets, pausing in the intervals of their own work, can give to each other that just and sympathetic criticism which it is the chief duty of reviewers to withhold. That the mutual criticism of poets is more sympathetic is perhaps true; but that such criticisms are more just or discriminating is highly doubtful. It all depends on the individual critic and his relation to the work he is discussing. Gray, although one of the most critical and scholarly of poets, praised beyond all reason the dreary tragedy of *Caractacus* by his friend Mason; yet that same Gray found in the beautiful music of Collins's Odes the evidence of a bad ear, and, though admitting their brilliant fancy, prophesied they would not survive. They have survived to rival his own work. Scott compared Joanna Baillie to Shakespeare, and Burns paid a similar compliment to John Horne, but unmerciful oblivion has cancelled both glowing estimates. Samuel Rogers, a brilliant wit but

a very mediocre poet, was rated by Byron far above Wordsworth and Coleridge. Shelley's favorite poem, as his wife tells us, was Southey's tedious and rambling epic of "Thalaba"—and this in 1815, when England was flooded with wonderful poetry. In speaking of his "Cenci" he puts Coleridge's "Remorse" at the head of all modern plays that have been acted, a judgment that would hardly be supported by even the most ardent admirers of Coleridge at his best. In the matter of advice, as well as in all things else, no stereotyped rules can tell the poetic workman what to follow and what to eschew. Each must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

Next let us watch the master-builders at the polishing and revision of their poems. Here at least, think you, there must be some great principle that applies to all. It is not so. We find one man improving his work by revision and another spoiling it; and we may find the same man at different times doing both. Nor is it strange that the same method should result so differently. One man's inspiration is like a flood of transient sunlight, which passes and leaves him to ruin his achievement by blundering in the dark. Bryant felt this, and in his poem of "The Poet" warns the reader against changing too rashly "what in fire was penned". On the other hand, certain minds have a deep and steady fertility, in which great thoughts grow and spread till their roots crack the original conception and demand a new one. Such was the case in several of Shakespeare's plays, especially in *Hamlet*, the second version of which is out of all comparison superior to the first. In general, minds that are more judicious than fecund improve their work by rewriting it, and vice versa; but this is by no means always true. Gray's composition was an almost ceaseless process of revision, usually with great improvement; but he cancelled the following beautiful stanza from his *Elegy*:—

"Hark! how the sacred Calm that breathes around,  
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;  
In still small accents whispering from the ground,  
A grateful earnest of eternal peace."

Byron's brain was far more fertile than critical, and he rewrote little; but he did recast the last act of "Manfred", and improved



it greatly in the process. One of the most serious dangers of revision is that the author then considers each separate detail in itself, not, as in the first production, in relation to the whole. As a result, he smooths off the individual line, forgetting that its original roughness brought variety just where monotony began. He tones down the boldness of particular flights of speech, forgetting that the special context made boldness a virtue. A good example of such case is found in Akenside. Mark Akenside was a minor poet of the eighteenth century who now is little known and little in accord with contemporary taste. Most modern readers in perusing his chief poem, "The Pleasures of the Imagination", would find their resulting pleasures very imaginary indeed. But he was a true poet in his way, and illustrates our point admirably. The first version of his "Pleasures of the Imagination" appeared when he was only twenty-two, and won a deserved popularity. But Akenside lived under the power of Pope and aspired, like Pope, to be a "perfect" writer. Hence he devoted several years of his mature manhood to a complete remodelling of his masterpiece. As regards this second version, which was left unfinished and published after his death, the prevailing opinion among critics is well stated by Professor Dowden: "The recast of 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' does not gain on the original poem. Fine audacities of expression are struck away; the philosophical analysis becomes more minute and labored. And if we are spared the incredible allegory . . . there are added passages which make amends to the injured Goddess of Dullness." How conscious poets are of this danger is shown by a passage in Shelley's preface to the "Revolt of Islam". "I would willingly", he says, "have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labor and revision is said to bestow. But I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind." We find cases in which the habit of revision becomes almost a disease. Philip James Bailey, a minor poet of the nineteenth century, wrote his "Festus" when he was twenty-two, and spent the rest of a long

life in issuing new editions of it, each of them with numerous changes. What he could not spoil by revision he skilfully diluted with additions. It really seemed as if the poor poem were dying of the dropsy, so steadily from edition to edition did it wax in bulk and wane in vitality. Keats's attempt to rewrite his noble fragment, "Hyperion", was an utter failure; but this may have been due to the decay of his physical powers as death approached. On the other side of the question, we find Tennyson improving almost everything that he corrected. The present revision of his "Lady of Shalott" is head and shoulders above the original. In the same way, Bryant began his poem "Earth" in rhyming stanzas, and, finding the result unsatisfactory, threw the whole thing into blank verse, to the great advantage of all concerned. Yet Bryant sometimes revised too much. In deference to the judgment of some hair-splitting critic, he made one of the most picturesque lines in his "Water-fowl" —

"Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

Here again, as everywhere, we find that each workman can succeed only by his own methods, and not always even by those.

Whatever may or may not be the joys of teaching "the young idea how to shoot", there is unquestionably an interest in studying the young idea at the teachable age, especially when it is the idea of a genius. This justifies a few words on literary apprenticeship. Here verily, saith the systematic educator, shall we find precedents for the proper training of our future poets. The present writer has looked and has not found them. Shall we have the incipient poet publish early and dare criticism, or wait until his genius matures? Tennyson ventured before the public when he was eighteen; Cowper not until he was nearly fifty. Should the beginner consider his effusions as masterpieces, or should he recognize frankly their nature as mere practice work? Young Thomson at the end of every year burned his whole twelve months' output; Shelley at the mature age of eighteen, wrote his "Queen Mab" in the eager belief that it would rejuvenate mankind. Thomson was wise, as the few brands plucked from the

burning show ; Shelley was mistaken and realized it later ; but who shall say that each man did not follow the course best adapted to his own development. Again, shall we insist that they confine their energies to the great masters, or shall we let their immature and wayward judgment wander through literature at will ? It is true that Milton, Tennyson, and Ruskin were fed from childhood on the Bible and the classics, and with noble results. But Burns took as his model Robert Fergusson, an obscure and now almost forgotten man. The boy Coleridge owed more to the graceful little sonnets of William Bowles than to any one of the intellectual giants. Oliver Wendell Holmes at the age of seventeen translated Vergil, and produced a rhyming school-exercise ; Bryant at the age of eighteen imitated Blair's mediocre and now neglected poem, "The Grave", and produced "Thanatopsis." Cowper's two great models were the great Milton and the little Churchill, and it would be rash indeed to say that the greater debt was to the greater man. It is true that Shelley in his preface to "The Revolt of Islam" says : "There is an education peculiarly fitted for a poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities." But the education which he goes on to define consists simply in a familiarity with nature, with human passions, and with the thoughts of great minds. That such familiarity should be a part of any writer's apprenticeship few will deny. It also seems to be almost universally true that great poets have formed the habit of scribbling verses early, though on entering manhood they have sometimes laid it aside for years. But beyond these two simple principles the instinct of individual need is the only certain law. Never yet has theory or system been able to bind the sweet influences of the Pierides or bring forth Melpomene in her season.

Such are the infinite variations through which our common humanity works out a common aspiration. Variety is something more than the spice of life ; it *is* life itself, as opposed to machinery. In one thing only have all poets a mutual share,—the enthusiasm of creative work. But even that joy manifests itself in a separate way for each separate man. In Scott it was

the tranquil pleasure of the born story-teller. In Dante it was that intense, smothered passion which had made him "lean for many years". And both these moods differed as much from the luxurious sensuousness of Keats or from the feverish excitement of De Musset as they differed from each other. But God be thanked that their methods were so many, that their joys were so diverse. So much the richer is our literary history, so much the wider the field of the reader's delight.

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## THE COLLEGE FACULTY AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Perhaps the most obvious things about college and university life are what are called "student activities",—things not nominated in the bond of the required curriculum, leading from, rather than to, the degrees offered. Athletics, social and fraternal groups, literary societies, religious organizations, the college press, dormitory life,—suggest the various channels into which flow the currents of voluntary student interest. Of course it is not to be affirmed that every student is engaged in all these activities; but a sufficient number are interested in each to socialize the student body into definitely organized groups. It is certain, moreover, that each group counts its peculiar activity as the most important thing on the campus, and it is equally certain that all join with each, magnanimously surrendering their own claims to the primacy, whenever the authorities of the institution fail to recognize the supreme importance of any one of these groups. For example, the whole college community will go into a unanimous fit of clamorous protest if the faculty remind the baseball pitcher that he must condescend to give a little more attention to such side-issues as English, mathematics, Latin; or all faces will become as one with a look of pained surprise when it is mildly suggested that the social clubs are giving too many dances; or the brows of the entire campus will lift in contemptuous wonder at the faculty's curious failure to appreciate relative values when they refuse to permit the editing of the journal, the writing of an oration for the literary society, representing the institution in competitive debate, to take the place of, say, English III in the required course; or again, the countenances of all, even of the "vilest sinners", will darken into the gloom of a protesting, though premature, piety if this same faculty should not feel warranted in suspending the exercises of the institution for certain religious meetings.

It is clear, then, that there are several elements common to these various student activities that must be reckoned with in any effort to influence them. In the first place, they are



voluntary, and thereby represent the natural expression of individual taste, temperament, and of more or less fitness. In them the student is following the lines of least resistance, and because he is doing what he really likes to do, he is intellectually awake and emotionally alive. His interest in them is therefore sure to be keen, vital, absorbing, in contrast to the wan, languid, faint stirrings of his enforced interest in laboratory and books. The truth of the matter is, if you want to discover the mental ability of some students, discuss with them their voluntary activities, and you will be startled and gratified, if you are broad enough to appreciate it, to see their classroom dullness brighten into an unsuspected intellectual brilliancy. It simply means that their minds are at work because they are engaged with something that really appeals to them.

In the next place, what is called college sentiment is behind these activities, or better, perhaps, in them is registered the ebb and flow of the tide of what the students themselves describe as "college spirit",—that power on the campus, to change the figure, that fuses the interests of each into an aggressive, romantic, idealistic feeling of a common fellowship of interests. Such a feeling is never stirred in the classroom; it never gathers about the great scholar as it does about the great quarterback, because somehow the former seems to be serving his own personal advantage while the latter makes the thrilling touchdown, not for himself, but for the glory of the group; even the successful orator or debating team in competitive contests does hardly more than ripple the surface of this sentiment, while the man who knocks the home-run in the ninth inning, not only "breaks up" the game, but also breaks up the depths of student sentiment into billows of stormy joy, the victory of the orator or debater being a trifle too intellectual to reach the essentially emotional mood of college spirit. It ought to, of course,—for is not the institution organized for wholly intellectual ends? To be sure it is; nevertheless, the human material with which we are dealing, being what it is, organizes its own interests with a bubbling ferment of emotionalism in them. It should not do this, but it does, and that is the fact of the matter of college sentiment. This is why it is so absorbing, so indiscriminating,

so confused as to real values, so sensitive as to what it considers its rights, so stupidly blind, we think, to the strictly intellectual concerns of the institution, so economical in the show of any enthusiasm for the required things of the curriculum, and a bit quick to display a readiness to differ with the faculty on really vital issues.

This rather facile readiness of student sentiment, on occasion, to take issue with so august and wise a body as a college faculty opens up a rather deeper matter,—a certain undercurrent of distrust, even of hostility, in its attitude toward the faculty. To student sentiment the faculty is an abstraction, a sort of organized conspiracy to make many of them do the things they don't want to do and prevent them from doing what they do want to do. It meets in a dark room,—a secret conclave in which they and their interests are discussed; and most of what it does is to make new rules to restrain them and to call attention to the breaking of old ones. It therefore exists only to hamper and bother them, forever insisting that they must do at least a modicum of work. The faculty are thus doing all they can to destroy "college spirit", and thereby not only take the joy out of life, but ruin the college. If the football team is weak and the baseball club has gone to pieces in ignominious defeat before its rivals, and the down-and-out mood settles heavy as lead on the spirit of the campus so that we can't get up a yell, "college spirit is dead", and of course the faculty did it. Anyway, from the standpoint of our young friends, that abstraction called collectively the faculty is a group of old fossils, or possibly "sis-sies", who have never kicked a pigskin or thrown a curve in all their old, faded lives. Of course there are individual members of the faculty whom they look on as exceptions, but when they think of the group, that is another matter. This student sentiment, therefore, is apt to feel that the faculty is out of sympathy with all those activities into which students enter with such zest, and is chiefly engaged in trying to hinder their success in them. For they are slow to discriminate between direction and control and the effort to abolish them entirely. This attitude of the students is apt to be the prolific source of a hidden antagonism which, on occasion, erupts into open friction. And the point is

that the most of it is traceable to the supposed unfriendliness of the faculty to their various activities.

These, then, represent the more or less human elements that give an assertive vitality to student activities,—they are the voluntary expression of student tastes and interest, and are therefore naturally absorbing in character; they have behind them both the instinctive and the organized sentiment of the campus, giving opportunity for the play of that mood of group loyalty and alma mater idealism which the student calls college spirit; and, finally, they have involved in them the possibilities of latent hostility to college authorities and of undisguised antagonism. Merely to approve these activities because they offer to growing boys the chance to blow off a superfluous animal energy that might otherwise be expended in worse things, simply to tolerate them as a sort of necessary evil incident to adolescent life, or to encourage them as a means of a more or less sensational method of keeping the institution before the public, is a total misunderstanding of their educational importance and an avoiding of a real educational responsibility. At this stage of our knowledge of what is involved in them it is hardly necessary to show that student activities are all charged with supremely vital educational values to the student as an individual and as a cooperating member of a group, and that in what he does and in how he does it, in the motives that impel him and the ideals that call to him, are stirred into action the deep and abiding qualities that count for better or worse in the kind of man he is to be. To the average instructor the business of trying to teach English, or mathematics, or physics, or Latin to the average student may seem such a serious matter that everything else the student does is idle play at best and dissipating frivolity at worst. We are apt to forget, therefore, that the members of various teams and organizations, while they may be wasting time that is due the classroom, may also be learning lessons of leadership, of practical efficiency, of fair play and a square deal, of honor, truthfulness, honesty, of social service, and of loyalty to group ideals. What to the faculty is mere play, viewed in this way, is lifted into the dignity of activities which, in the truest sense, are training men and shaping character.

From this standpoint, how may the faculty influence for the best these various student activities? In the first place, there should be a generous, though intelligent, approval of them, or else they should be abolished. If they are not worth bothering with, wipe them out. The trouble is that too many of us accept them as a sort of nuisance that we should like to be rid of if we dared, and our whole attitude is carping, censorious, hostile, nagging. Nothing is gained by such an attitude and its effect is to create a sentiment in the student body that the faculty exists to thwart their interests. Consequently they are inclined to look with suspicion upon whatever is done even to regulate or control their activities. Certainly, if faculty and students are thus involved in an atmosphere of distrust on matters intensely vital to one of the parties in the situation, the former, while it may limit these activities, can have little influence in developing their educational values. The point here is simply this: If the faculty disapproves of the things that mean so much to the student, it should reduce them to a minimum or abolish them entirely; if, however, the faculty approves them, it should do so generously and intelligently.

This would lead naturally to the method of sympathetic coöperation. The first element in this coöperation is to make the students feel that their activities are essential parts of the general institutional life,—that the athletic clubs, the college publications, the literary societies, the religious organizations, the recognized social groups, the dormitories,—really represent the college, and that the faculty is not a detached police officer to arrest lawbreakers and inflict punishment, but another representative, coöperative body to help rather than hinder. Much of our trouble and no little of our failure to inform student activities with right ideals are largely due to the remoteness of the faculty from them. We have depended too much on rules and long-distance management from the rostrum, and have thereby multiplied our difficulties and let many educational values be perverted or lost entirely. The human touch that counts for so much has been noticeable from its lack.

But the faculty is not a human institution; as I have said, it is rather a vague abstraction. The problem therefore is to hu-

manize it so that its influence can reach that other very human element in the situation,—the student. This can be done only by bringing individual members into personal coöperation with the students and their activities. I use the word coöperation in order to emphasize that I do not mean control in the sense of management of student activities by the faculty through its individual representatives. If the faculty is to control in the sense of absolute management, we are giving up a splendid opportunity for training the student in self-reliance, resourcefulness, the power of initiative, the sense of responsibility, and practical efficiency in organizing and carrying to successful issue those concerns which are peculiar to his tastes and interests. Faculty coöperation rather means that the faculty is to relate itself vitally to each form of student activity by individual members who stand to the students as guides, counsellors, friends, representing, moreover, the sympathetic recognition on the part of the faculty that the things the students are doing are really worth while and belong to the organic life of the institution.

To work out this method of influencing student activities means the inflicting upon individual members of faculties what they may regard as uncongenial, distasteful, and time-consuming tasks. It is wholly to the credit of an instructor that he resents any apparent interruption of what he considers his chief business,—that of teaching, of adding to his scholarship, and of producing something. To not a few of them, moreover, it is bad enough to have to be bothered with raw boys in the classroom, and from even this they would gladly escape as soon as possible into the quiet harbor of a Carnegie Pension. Now to ask members of the faculty to come into closer contact with students by coöperating with them in a sympathetic way in their various activities,—what is this but an added burden and an annoying interruption? Holding such a view, the average instructor thinks that athletic activities should be turned over to the athletic director and the coach, the religious activities to the “paid” secretary, the social interests left to the common human instincts and conventional habits, and the literary societies permitted to die, on the ground of having already outlived their usefulness. This is not an unfair statement of the attitude of



many a college instructor to student activities, particularly when the gray in his hair shows that he is passing out of his own first youth and beginning to forget that he ever had a boyhood.

If this attitude of just letting things go their own way prevails with the faculty, the institution is hardly meeting its educational responsibilities. Anything that absorbs student interests as their various activities do calls for a closer intimacy of contact between faculty and students than even the classroom does. And to the students and the faculty as well as to the larger life of the institution sympathetic, individual coöperation is worth the price paid. There are doubtless in every faculty men who in their student days were themselves either experts in these student activities or were deeply interested in some one or more of them. Let such men, each in the particular activity in which as a student he was most interested, be put in charge as the coöperating faculty representative. He should, moreover, be a man who knows the student mind, understands the student temperament, can appreciate the student's point of view even in its most perversely wayward moods, has a clear insight into the educational values of the particular activity he is trying to direct, and is strong enough relentlessly to stand by the moral issues involved. It is only by such a man working in this way that the faculty can hope to influence for the best student activities and subdue them to the educational ends for which the institution exists.

The individual instructors, moreover, who are thus engaged will also reap unlooked-for rewards. Their human touch with the students will contribute to a growing knowledge of student character which they cannot possibly get from the classroom, and this will react upon their teaching so as to make it better adapted in its methods and surer in its results. In a word, they will for the first time become really acquainted with the material with which they are dealing, and consequently in a position to do more with it. The teacher enthroned behind his desk is always in danger of getting farther and farther away, as the years come and go, from a sympathetic knowledge of that procession of immortal youth which, as he grows older, seems ever to become younger with the passing days. It is an

immense gain to him if he uses properly the opportunities offered by his coöperating with them in the things which appeal so profoundly to them because they are young. For the instructor these opportunities may be not only his chance to touch aspiring life to finer issues, but also his own fountain of immortal youth, saving him from the sear and yellow leaf of a dry and drudging old age. These boys, too, in whose play and work he seems to share, study better for him, and that loyalty born of his leadership in their games, their social life, their literary societies, their religious organizations, easily transfers itself to a closer application to what the instructor teaches, an application all the more fruitful in its results because it is warmed by the glow of personal affection. The instructor, therefore, gets as well as gives, and the institution he serves becomes his debtor because he not only teaches a subject but also helps to fuse all the manifold forces of its life to the larger end of making men as well as of creating scholars.

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## GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S FAVORITE NOVEL

As the student of history looks back a century he sees the year eighteen thirteen as the twelve-month of Vittoria and Leipsic in the old world, and of Lake Erie in the new. James Madison occupied the White House; George the Third misgoverned England, and Napoleon, undiscouraged by his Russian fiasco, was trying to rule most of the rest of Europe. Constable and Wilkie were the foremost painters of the day; Schubert and Weber the composers of widest appeal. The names of Stephenson and Ampère stood premier in the field of scientific endeavor, and the theatre's most applauded ones were the oddly differing Kean and Grimaldi. As to British letters they seemed "between seasons", in spite of the appearance of the opening cantos of *Childe Harold* in the February of eighteen twelve and of the rich promise of a Shelley yet-to-be held between the drab covers of the just published *Queen Mab*. Scott's metrical romances had fallen from the high estate of *The Lady of the Lake* and *Marmion* to the dull levels of *Rokeby* and *Lord of the Isles*, while the unfinished manuscript of *Waverly* yet lay half-forgotten in the litter of an Abbotsford drawer. Dickens, Thackeray, and Browning were babes in arms; Tennyson was but five, Keats not yet twenty, and the recently appointed Lauriate, Mr. Southey, was not, of course, writing anything inspiring for contemporary "centre-tables", where, side by side, reposed Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming* and the *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* from the estimable pen of Hannah More.

At such a moment came *Pride and Prejudice*, which Disraeli was to admit he had read seventeen times, and of which Professor Saintsbury was to write: "It is the most perfect and most eminently quintessential of Miss Austen's works."

First composed in seventeen ninety-six, when the author was barely twenty-one, revised and finished full fifteen years later, while she lived in Chawton, and published only four years before her passing, it set a new high-water mark in the literature of the story. What a cast of characters were then and there put forward on the stage of the novel-readers of great-grandmother's

heyday: Mr. Bennett, amiable and peace-loving, with that querulous and ambitious wife of his, so exquisitely amusing; Darcy, wealthy, dignified and generally "excellent"; Wickham the unprincipled; Elizabeth the lively and wholly charming; and that small-souled Collins, ineffable, immortal, better than anything in all Addison and as good as Tom Fielding's best. Here was as long a step in the leading of English literature back to life and naturalness from the formal unrealities of the "classic" era as was ever *The Task* or *The Cottar's Saturday Night*.

The deadening influence of classicism, however, had not fallen on English prose as it had on English poetry and even less had it affected prose fiction. While the versifiers of the period of Pope had busied themselves to "smooth and inlay, clip and fit", Addison had been picturing forth Sir Roger de Coverley, the country squire of the early seventeen hundreds and the broad-minded gentleman of all time,—the political philosopher, the leisurely journalist, the kindly "Spectator". Swift's cruel and embittered genius had merged eternal truth in the turbulent sea of temporary policy, but almost at the same instant Defoe had so succeeded in making the thing that is not seem as the thing that is that even to-day one finds many a reader convinced of the complete truth of *Robinson Crusoe* and undoubtedly accepting the *Journal of the Plague Year* as, what it purports to be, the chronicle of an eye-witness to those horrors. Then came self-conscious Sterne, but *My Uncle Toby* was nevertheless a character of no single age; wash from him the author's veneer of innuendo and mawkishness and he is the eternal individual. Goldsmith's Vicar, if less convincing, yet lived and moved and had his literary being in the pages of a story which is the first genuine tale of domestic life in the tongue. If Richardson was not "compelling", as Charles Anderson Dana used to say, yet his fellow novelists, Smollett and Fielding, were realistic enough to satisfy the most exacting.

After that triumvirate a change came over the spirit of the dream of the story: new influences began to work havoc with naturalness. Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas* is little more than a literary curiosity. Whatever may be said of its philosophy,

both matter and manner were Augustan in spirit, stilted and artificial. Then Horace Walpole, cynic and coxcomb, in his *Castle of Otranto*, invented the romantic tale of sighing portraits, bleeding statues, and clanking chains. Ten years more and Anne Radcliffe's *Udolpho* and "Monk" Lewis's imaginings went further even than this. Secret vaults, sliding panels, and unguessed trap-doors became as common as front stairs and chamber closets. Mysterious, sin-stained brunettes, of the type of Byron's Lara were to be met with as often as matter-of-fact tradesmen from just around the corner. Impenetrable forests, wild sunsets, and melancholy dawns were accepted as the natural and usual concomitants of every countryside and day. Such "Tales of Terror" have their fascination for all in some moods, and for a few always. The student cannot but appreciate their influence on the later work of such as Hawthorne and Poe and Stevenson, as well as Scott and Coleridge. *Thrawn Janet* and *Christabel*, for instance, are born of just such long-passed ancestry. But how ridiculously unlike life it all was! Take a specimen page of Lewis's *Bravo of Venice* and compare it with Jane Austen or George Eliot, with Thackeray or Dickens, and one sees how real was the need, in prose fiction as in verse, of a return to nature :—

It was evening. Multitudes of light clouds, partially illuminated by the moonbeams, overspread the horizon, and through them floated the moon in tranquil majesty, while her splendor was reflected by every wave of the Adriatic Sea. All was hushed around; gently was the water rippled by the night wind; gently did the night wind sigh through the Colonnades of Venice.

It was midnight; and still sat a stranger, solitary and sad, on the border of the great canal. Now with a glance he measured the battlements and proud towers of the city; and now he fixed his melancholy eyes upon the waters with a vacant stare. At length he spoke :—

"Wretch that I am, whither shall I go? Here I sit in Venice, and what would it avail me to wander further? What will become of me? All now slumber, save myself! The Doge rests on his couch of down; the beggar's head presses the straw pillow; but for *me* there is no bed except the cold, damp earth! There is no gondolier so wretched



but he knows where to find work by day and shelter by night—while I—while I—Oh! dreadful is the destiny of which I am made the sport!"

He began to examine for the twentieth time the pockets of his tattered garments. "No! not one paolo, by heavens!—and I hunger almost to death!"

He unsheathed his sword; he waved it in the moonshine, and sighed, as he marked the glittering of the steel

"No, no, my old true companion, thou and I must never part. Mine thou shalt remain though I starve for it. Oh, was not that a golden time when Valeria gave thee to me, and when she threw the belt over my shoulder, I kissed thee and Valeria? She has deserted us for another world, but thou and I will never part in this."

He wiped away a drop which hung from his eyelid.

"Pshaw! 'twas not a tear; the night wind is sharp and bitter, and makes the eyes water; but as for *tears*—Absurd! my weeping days are over."

And as he spoke the unfortunate (for such by his discourse and situation he appeared to be) dashed his forehead against the earth, and his lips were already unclosed to curse the hour which gave him being, when he seemed suddenly to recollect himself. He rested his head on his elbow, and sang mournfully the burthen of a song which had delighted his childhood in the castle of his ancestors.

Two women led the story back from such tinséled unrealities to common sense. Maria Edgeworth, so highly esteemed by Walter Scott, eight years older than Jane Austen and outliving her thirty-two years, sounded not at all uncertainly the note of actuality and made for herself a high place among those who have pictured Irish life and character; but with all this she was far excelled by her greater sister story-teller.

Jane Austen told the tale of the better middle-class English life; the comedy of manners. It is a restricted subject, but she covered it so perfectly that there can be no just question as to her genius. She was possessed of a style wholly unconscious and lucidly clear; her power of satire was charming, gentle, and genteel, yet telling and true; her wit was as genuine as it was delicate, and she was gifted with a wonderfully clear penetration. Great for all this, Jane Austen is yet greater in that she was as truly a literary pioneer as was either Cowper or Burns. The

heroine of fiction, when she began to write, was an ultra-refined young woman, physically weak and mentally almost imbecile, who wept and fainted and had hysterics up to the final chapter. *Sense and Sensibility* smiled this young lady out of existence, even as *Northanger Abbey* laughed off the boards all the ridiculous sensationalism of the Radcliffe-Walpole sort.

From a literary point of view, Miss Austen's short life may be held to lie between the periods respectively dominated by Burns and Byron. Her work fell within only eight years,—one period of three and another, after an interval, of five,—yet in that she gave for our enjoying an even half-dozen stories of first rank and not a single failure. Hers was the quietest sort of a quiet life, far removed from the work-a-day world, with not one happening of romantic sort to ruffle the placid months; a rare visit to Bath was a dissipation to be dreamed of before and after. The author of *Pride and Prejudice* was eighteen when the Terror drenched France with the blood of its best, and she died some twenty-five months after Waterloo had changed all contemporary history, yet there sounds no note of any of this in what she wrote. She was born at Steventon, in Hampshire, on the twelfth of December, seventeen seventy-five, and as her father was a clergyman of some literary attainments she was given rather more education than usual for girls of a period when it was not quite "nice" for a young woman to know much. *Cranford* suggests such days as she must have known, or, better still, turn to her own heroines for pictures of those post-chaise times when well-bred folks prided themselves on the ability to talk like copybooks.

The Austen parsonage was a square, old-fashioned house, set in a square, old-fashioned garden given over to such precise cultivation as one glimpses in Mr. Dobson's delightful *A Gentleman of the Old School*. The sloping meadows that lay about were the floor of a shallow valley, cut by hedgerows and bounded by not lofty hills. Here was nothing in all nature of a sort to stir imaginings such as one feels in the wild, even primeval Haworth land of the Brontës, or in the Hardy and Philpotts shires; it was satisfying but not stirring, though people, not nature, were to inspire that affectionate, unselfish girl of rich

coloring, dark hair, and brown eyes,—she of good sense, unwearied patience, and undulled brightness. Her hours were filled with playing on the pianoforte or harp, with copying indifferent drawings or gilding flowerpots, with netting gloves or hemming veils; with pottering about the garden, or, perhaps, pattens and all, braving the mud of the country lanes and the frowns of Mrs. Grundy quite as did her own Elizabeth Bennett. As to her writing, it was done at a diminutive desk set in the sunny bay of the parsonage parlor, where every chance caller could interrupt and distract; though they never guessed so much, since the sprightly little authoress invariably concealed her neatly written pages with a piece of fancy work, kept ready at hand for just such use.

Mr. Hugh Thomson's frontispiece to *Pride and Prejudice* seems somehow to suggest "the gentle Jane" at that slender-legged desk of hers. The diminutive foot-stool at the side of the harp-backed chair, the flowers set on the window ledge within the muslin curtains, the quill pen balanced across the Dresden-like inkwell,—it all seems a part of Chawton, say, if not actually photographic of Steventon parsonage. And the seated girl, in the short-waisted gown and a suggestion of little curls over her ears, might be Miss Austen's self as well as another, looking out from that window across smooth lawns to leafy parks, everything in nature as trim and prim, as proper and discreet as Hampshire folk themselves.

Yet that window gave upon all a novelist's world, and if it seem a narrow outlook upon life from which to draw it accurately, was not the art greater to create from it scenes so convincing and alluring? Goldwin Smith has aptly summarized it: "Metaphor has been exhausted in depicting the perfection of that art, combined, as it must be combined, if fair view be taken, with the narrowness of her field." Art and humanity were inborn in this première picturer of still life; or, to put it another way, fidelity and sympathy were traits native to her every thought and expression. Her pen touched nothing that it did not forthwith stand out as distinct as life itself, no matter how dull or prosy it had seemed before that apotheosis. A stretch of gray dawn reaching up to a bit of blue sky makes a tame picture

save when an exceedingly great artist paints it, and yet, once handled by the master, the page or canvas holds its own in worth and interest with no matter what portrayal of the heroic and unusual. As was said by Brunetière, to condense his paragraph to a sentence, a dewdrop is as perfect as a star.

Miss Austen drew the little things,—the average men and women. She sounded no deep chords, moved to no passions; there were no glaring effects among the colors on her palette. But, if she painted in drabs and browns, shade and tone were none the less charming both in delicacy and truth; she is the precisionist in painting. Stroke after stroke is traced, trivial, unenforced, effortless, and the result is a miniature,—a miniature of the Meissonier sort, however, not such as were Cosway's; such miniature as could have been painted only by one whose whole heart was in the labor, and into whose life came little to distract completest attention from the ivory-pure surface on which the picture was growing.

Not less than genius can make the commonplace seem eventful, if not actually important, but the doing of this was itself a commonplace to Jane Austen. Scott and Macaulay have both borne testimony to this. The essayist writes:—

Shakespeare had neither equal nor second. But among the writers who have approached nearest to the manner of the great master, we have no hesitation in placing Jane Austen. She has given us a multitude of characters, all, in a certain sense, commonplace, such as we meet every day. Yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings.

Scott says much the same thing in quite as characteristic a way:—

That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with. The big bow-wow I can do myself like anyone going; but the exquisite touch, which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied me.

It was Scott, too, who, at another time, remarked: "Miss Austen has given us portraits of real society which I hold

infinitely superior to anything vain man has produced of a like nature."

Such tributes are many. Their name is legion who avow themselves "Janites". Cardinal Newman said that he read at least two of Miss Austen's novels once every year for the sake of his style. Dr. W. J. Dawson, referring to her as "a true immortal", adds "and supreme mistress of comedy", which is implied again in Goldwin Smith's dictum that she could have drawn Dame Quickly or Juliet's Nurse had she thought to. Augustine Birrell places her ahead of both Brontë and Eliot; Arlo Bates calls her the greatest woman novelist; Guizot goes a step further in ranking her the first of all novelists, and Professor Saintsbury caps the climax in saying that he would undertake to find another Homer before another Jane.

Steventon, Southampton, Bath, Chawton, and Winchester,—that is the whole external setting to Miss Austen's brief story of forty-two years. *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811, had been written fourteen years earlier, when she was twenty-two; *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) had been declined when she was twenty-one. Then came *Mansfield Park* (1814), with a hero and heroine somewhat insipid, if you choose, but with at least one matchless scene, that of the rehearsal, and then *Emma* (1816), in which the author declared she had drawn a heroine so much to her own liking that no one else could possibly care for her; a judgment, be it added, that was sadly at fault, for the largeness and variety of the story has given it full warrant to dispute with *Pride and Prejudice* itself the honor of first rank in the too-short list of titles which build up the "Austenians" bible. All of these novels were issued anonymously, the publishers' official avowal of their creator's identity not being made till the year following her death, when also appeared (1818) over her own name, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, that tale of Bath which, albeit faint in tone and not so potent in its interest as the other stories, is yet delicate to the point of charming and wholly in keeping. The *Abbey*, sold years earlier for ten pounds but left neglected in the unappreciative purchaser's desk until the writer's brother bought it back, is the story which Sir Walter liked best of all, while Macaulay declared it was worth



all Pliny and Dickens put together. Certainly in freshness and humor, completeness and finish, it is a joy forever.

Three, and perhaps four, of these stories were written with no idea that they would ever be published. Jane wrote because "it was in her", quite as did Scott, though her creative power was of a wholly different order from that with which the Wizard of the North captivated his thousands of readers. Miss Austen left few memorable scenes and no Homeric struggles; she bequeathed to posterity just people, whom it is easier to understand than to describe, for they evolve themselves, and so tell their own stories. In this their literary parent bears close comparison with Thackeray. She has kindness of satire, too, and her humor is full as salty, albeit that same is rather apt to suggest Joseph Addison, for it holds his demureness, an identical lightness of touch, and quite the same repression of what in less gifted hands had sounded as unpleasantly loud tones. As to pathos,—and with Thackeray again in mind,—the woman falls far behind, though it is to be remembered that she lived and wrote when young ladies never dreamed of laying bare their inmost thoughts and selves as two out of every three present-day tale-tellers hasten to do; but the advantage comes to her side of the ledger again when characterization merges into caricature, for she pictures foibles far more gently than "William Makepeace Goliath", though not a whit less mercilessly in the final estimate. How the quiet little daughter of a country parson did love to roast and carve a fool! She could out-Addison Addison there. The snobbish Collins, the horribly true Mrs. Bennett with her match-making soul,—where in literature are better figure-pieces of the sort than these?

Thus called back to *Pride and Prejudice* one cannot but quote Saintsbury's deserved tribute to the character in that story who is most loved and will be longest remembered,—the ever delightful Elizabeth. He says:—

In the novels of the last hundred years there are vast numbers of young ladies with whom it might be a pleasure to fall in love; there are at least five of whom, as it seems to me, no man of taste and spirit can help doing so. Their names are, in chronological order, Elizabeth Bennett, Diana

Vernon, Argemone Lavington, Beatrix Esmond, and Barbara Grant. I should have been most in love with Beatrix and Argemone; I should, I think, for mere occasional companionship, have preferred Diana and Barbara. But to live with and to marry, I do not know that any one of the four can come into competition with Elizabeth.

When, on July 24th, 1817, Miss Austen laid by forever that magic pen,—she was then living in Winchester, in whose long cathedral aisle she was buried three days later,—she had made, perhaps, thirty-five hundred dollars. She had lacked appreciation while living; Maria Edgeworth and Fanny Burney were ranked far above her in those days, but she had erected a pedestal on which to-day she stands securely. In the history of the English novel she is one of the important because one of the indicative figures, and it is her perfect truth to life that makes her of primary worth. To write of men and women who are not extraordinary mentally, morally, or intellectually, to set them on a narrow stage and involve them in no striking situations, and yet never to fail to discriminate them the one from the other as distinctly and unerringly as though we had known them personally and for years, this is the closest possible literary approach to truth,—and the highest genius is the genius which makes the closest approach to truth.

WARWICK JAMES PRICE.

Philadelphia, Penn.

## ROALD AMUNDSEN AND THE SOUTH POLE

Once in a generation of men some pioneer writes a story of adventures in the uttermost places that thrills the world and remains a classic for all time to come. Such was Edward Whymper's *Scrambles Among the Alps*, the story of his conquest of the Matterhorn. Such was Stanley's *How I Found Livingston*, or Captain Cook's *Voyages of Discovery*. These became at once thrilling tales for children about the fireside, guide-books for the amateur and style-books for the writer of travels. In Roald Amundsen's book *The South Pole*,<sup>1</sup> we have a work that must undoubtedly become a similar classic. Forty years will improve its flavor, but will not dim its charm or usefulness.

This unique book gives a very detailed account of the successful Norwegian Antarctic expedition. It begins with a thirteen-page résumé of the voyage, entitled "The First Account", which presumably was the story as first given to the press March 8, 1912. Following this comes an introduction by Fridtjof Nansen. Volume I contains an account of the preparations and the voyage to southern waters. Volume II begins with the start for the Pole from the winter quarters and gives in great detail the story of the final triumph. Then follows an account of the return to civilization. The five appendices contain a description of the "Fram", meteorological observations, including the aurora australis, geologic observations, astronomic observations, and oceanography. There are several fine maps and charts and 136 excellent photographs.

The book is written in quaint and charming style, with a delicate humor that delights us at every page. Not a little of its effectiveness in English must be due to the skill of the translator.

Nansen's introduction is a pleasant tribute to Roald Amundsen. It reviews his career, beginning with his first voyage when he sailed in the "Gjøa" with the double object of discovering the magnetic North Pole and making the northwest passage. It tells

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<sup>1</sup> *The South Pole: An Account of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition in the "Fram", 1910-1912*, by Roald Amundsen. Translated from the Norwegian by A. G. Chater. 2 vols. London: John Murray; New York: Lee Keedick. 1913.

how he sailed his little yacht over the whole arctic region round the north of America, through the course that had been sought for four hundred years. And yet, so Nansen tells us, even with such a record, he had a long struggle to complete the equipment for his new expedition. Outside of a few friends, little interest was shown in him or his work, and he himself gave everything he possessed in the world:—

“Loaded with anxieties and debts, . . . he sailed out quietly on a summer night.” Then he was forgotten. As Nansen continues: “Everyone went on with his own affairs. The mists were upon us day after day, week after week, . . . the mists that are kind to little men and swallow up all that is great and towers above them. Suddenly a bright spring day cuts through the bank of fog. There is a new message. People stop again and look up. *High above them shines a deed, a man.* A wave of joy runs through the souls of men; their eyes are bright as the flags that wave about them.

“Why? On account of the great geographical discoveries, the important scientific results? Oh no; that will come later for the few specialists. This is something all can understand. A victory of human mind and human strength over the dominion and powers of nature; a deed that lifts us above the grey monotony of daily life; a view over shining plains, with lofty mountains against the cold blue sky, and lands covered by ice-sheets of inconceivable extent; a vision of long-vanished glacial times; the triumph of the living over the stiffened realm of death. There is a ring of steeled, purposeful human will—through icy frosts, snow-storms, and death.

“For the victory is not due to the great inventions of the present day and the many new appliances of every kind. The means used are of immense antiquity, the same as were known to the nomad thousands of years ago, when he pushed forward across the snow-covered plains of Siberia and Northern Europe. But *everything*, great and small was thoroughly thought out, and the plan was splendidly executed. It is the *man* that matters, here as everywhere. Like everything great, it all looks so plain and simple. Of course, that is just as it had to be, we think.”

This we quote for the benefit of those utilitarian philosophers who see no earthly use in polar explorations anyhow.

Amundsen's account begins with the story of the numerous explorations of the southern seas, beginning with Prince Henry of Portugal, who crossed the equator in 1470, down through the notable voyages of da Gama, Vespucci, Magellan, Drake, Captain Cook, to whom Amundsen pays a great tribute, Dumont, D'Urville, Wilkes, the American sent out by Congress in 1838, and Admiral Ross, who went in 1841 through the ice pack into the open Antarctic Sea in two little boats that were regular tubs. Ross opened up the way by which the Pole was finally reached.

Amundsen was a member of the Belgian expedition under Gerlache, which set out in 1897. We quote the following passages about another member of the Gerlache expedition who came later to a manner of celebrity :—

"Frederick A. Cook, of Brooklyn," says Amundsen, "was surgeon to the expedition—beloved and respected by all. As a medical man, his calm and convincing presence had an excellent effect. As things turned out, the greatest responsibility fell upon Cook, but he mastered the situation in a wonderful way. Through his practical qualities he became finally indispensable. It cannot be denied that the Belgian Antarctic expedition owes a great debt to Cook. . . .

"Afterwards sickness appeared, and threatened the most serious danger to the expedition—scurvy and insanity. Scurvy especially increased, and did such havoc that finally there was not a single man who escaped being attacked by this fearful disease.

"Cook's behavior at this time won the respect and devotion of all. It is not too much to say that Cook was the most popular man of the expedition, and he deserved it. From morning to night he was occupied with his many patients, and when the sun returned it happened not infrequently that, after a strenuous day's work, the doctor sacrificed his night's sleep to go hunting for seals and penguins, in order to provide the fresh meat that was so greatly needed by all."

When midsummer failed to release the ship from the ice, it was Cook who devised an ingenious method of sawing her out, thus enabling her to reach the open lead.

"Cook was incontestably the leading spirit in this work, and gained such honor among the members of the expedition



that I think it is just to mention it. Upright, honorable, capable, and conscientious in the extreme—such is the memory we retain of Frederick A. Cook from those days.

"Little did his comrades suspect that a few years later he would be regarded as one of the greatest humbugs the world has ever seen. This is a psychological enigma well worth studying for those who care to do so."

This part of the book closes with a great tribute to Captain Scott and Lieutenant Ernest Shackleton.

"The North Pole is reached!" This dispatch in September, 1909, wrought a great change in the plans of Amundsen. It found him in the midst of the preparation for the exploration of the north polar basin. Here was a most unpleasant predicament. The North Pole question was solved, and he felt that under the spell of Peary's deed his own expedition, though its chief purpose had been all along scientific, and not for record-breaking, might go to pieces. Under the circumstances he felt that there was nothing to do but attack the last great problem, the South Pole. If he could solve that, he could raise as much money as he wanted for later ventures in the North. He decided to keep his new purpose entirely secret, and went on with the plans for the expedition, ostensibly to go to northern waters. He felt that his friends would not criticize him in this course, and he did not care particularly what his enemies said. He had gone too far to retreat, and lose what had already been expended.

The explorer decided to avoid completely every route that had already been followed, or might be followed by the English, German, and Japanese expeditions that were then under way. The following was the plan to which he consistently adhered: (1) Depart from Norway not later than the middle of August, 1910. (2) Call at the Madeira Islands. (3) Sail to the south of Cape of Good Hope and Australia. (4) Push through ice pack into Ross Sea about New Year, 1911. (5) Take as base of operations the Bay of Whales in the great Antarctic Barrier, reaching there about January 15. (6) Winter on the Barrier in 'summer' of 1911 and strike for the Pole about October, 1911.

This whole plan was worked out by Amundsen at his home near Christiania in September, 1909, and was carried out to the

last detail. The final sentence of his plan was: "Thus we shall be back from the polar journey on January 25th." It was on January 25, 1912, that he returned to winter quarters after his successful journey to the Pole.

Herein lies the great reason for Amundsen's success. His whole expedition was planned with such utmost care. It was he who oversaw all arrangements. The provisions were chosen under his personal care, the dogs, the tools, the instruments, the clothing, the sledges, and the skis.

The loyal citizens of Norway contributed great numbers of presents in the way of food, clothing, wine, medical supplies, etc. Yet the one great thing they lacked was money. They were from the beginning on a very small budget.

Amundsen was aided by many new inventions. Thus he had an oil-motor for his ship, a modern lighting system, presumably acetylene, a modern petroleum heating system for winter quarters, a ready-built house, a gramophone for amusement, and electrical apparatus. Amundsen goes into great detail in his description of the provisioning. His book is thus a most valuable guide for explorers.

It is evident that the preparedness of the expedition was the reason of its success. Modern invention helped to enliven the burden of the long southern winter. It made the machinery work more smoothly. But it is also evident as we turn the pages of the history that the genius of the chief was after all the great element of success. The chief was a great executive, and withal a wonderful optimist.

One of the most interesting things is the explorer's story of how they accommodated the dogs on board ship. They kept their ninety-seven arctic dogs all on deck, building a false floor entirely over the ship's deck and about three inches above it. This floor was removable, allowing cleaning and ventilation. Crossing the tropics it was shaded all over. Thus, Amundsen carried his thick-haired eskimos straight across the tropics without losing any of them; in fact, their numbers were considerably increased in the course of nature!

Amundsen shows extraordinary affection for his dogs. He was compelled to kill many during his final dash to the Pole, and

nothing gave him greater grief. One bad habit, he says, into which these eskimo dogs have fallen during the course of ages is their tendency to hold howling concerts. He was never able to make out the real meaning of these performances. The whole pack might be lying perfectly still and quiet on deck when a single individual would take upon himself the part of leader of the chorus and set up a long, blood-curdling yowl. Then the whole pack joined in and this infernal din went on at full steam for several minutes. This was calculated to tear the soundest sleeper from his slumbers. The only amusing thing about it was the conclusion. They all stopped short at the same instant, just as a well-trained chorus obeys the baton of its director.

On June 7, 1910, the expedition left Norway. I have not mentioned one important omen—the ship was the “Fram”, the sturdy boat in which Nansen reached his farthest north. The Norwegian Storthing had lent the boat and had donated about \$20,000 for repairs and alterations.

It was not until the Madeira Islands were reached that Amundsen acquainted his fellows with his plans. Only the captain of the vessel had known of them heretofore. Up to this time the men had understood that they were bound for northern waters after rounding Cape Horn. Without exception they all declared instantly for the South Pole.

Now comes the long and tedious voyage of 16,000 miles around the Cape of Good Hope into the seas south of Australia. But there was no time for idleness. Every hour of the day was put in on preparations for the final expedition. Each man in the crew was a specialist. They were picked men chosen for their all-round qualities. Some of those who did menial tasks were highly educated.

It was on January 14, 1911, that the “Fram” arrived at the Ross Barrier, long considered one of the most mysterious natural phenomena of the earth. Here they moored in the vast Bay of Whales in latitude 79 S. Amundsen's descriptions of the great white ice barrier are magnificent.

They spent many days in putting up the house, the parts of which had already been labeled and numbered, in training the dogs, some of which were green hands, killing seals, and trans-

porting the provisions from the "Fram" into their winter quarters. Their house was admirably constructed for winter quarters. It consisted of one large room and a kitchen. Before winter came on they built pent-houses along the sides and thus secured a great deal of room. They also made caverns in the ice around the house.

On February 4, 1911, they received a visit from the "Terra Nova", Captain Scott's vessel. Scott was not on board, but they got news of him and his work in exploring King Edward VII Land.

On February 10, Amundsen set forth on what he calls his depot journey. He placed large depots of provisions in succession at latitudes 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 S. These depots were quite solidly constructed of ice, about twelve feet in height, and were filled with cases of provisions. They were marked for several miles on each side with bamboo poles, flags, etc., so that any one might be easily found. The placing of these caches took up several weeks of hard work. Amundsen did not fail to put a great deal of seal-meat in the depots and this gave him fresh meat on the final journey to and from the Pole.

As soon as these depots were placed it was time to go into winter quarters, remembering that June, July, and August constitute winter in the southern hemisphere. The men passed this period in great comfort, in spite of such temperature as 76 degrees below zero.

The latter part of Volume I is devoted to the description of a day at Framheim. Rising early, it was the custom to reconnoitre briefly to note anything that had happened during the sleeping period. They all seem to have religiously brushed their teeth every morning, and to have bathed frequently, even using an American vapor-bath. Their breakfast consisted of hot American pan-cakes washed down with strong aromatic coffee. Some of the morning duties were taking the dogs out for exercise, working on their sledging outfit, digging passages in the ice, sewing leather clothing, packing and checking provisions for the dash to the Pole, washing clothes, dishes, etc.

Amundsen's attitude toward the use of alcoholic beverages in polar exploration is interesting. We expected to hear him

condemn it. Far from this, he considers "a tot of spirits" an excellent medicine in sub-zero emergencies. "The swilling of hot coffee," says he, "does not fill the bill." And he feels that his men needed it occasionally to keep up their cheer, and to patch up their indifferences. All of this is put in the quaintest manner.

It is hard for us to understand the long period of preparation that Amundsen thought necessary for the final dash to the Pole. We must remember that the weight of the outfit had to be reduced in every possible way and that everything taken with them must at the same time be absolutely trustworthy in character. Much of their clothing had to be remade; practically all shoes had to be expanded, as they were too small for feet with three pairs of stockings. Again, it would have been absolute folly to start until spring and milder temperature were certain.

Amundsen and his party got away for the Pole on October 19, 1911. There were five in the party, Hanssen, Wisting, Hassel, Bjaaland, and himself. They had four sledges with thirteen dogs to each. At the start the sledges were very light, as they took only supplies for the trip to 80 S., where their cases were awaiting them. Their departure from Framheim was, of course, a great event. All the crew turned out to see them depart and one man photographed them with a cinematograph. These films have been used by Amundsen in his lectures in America.

The first day they made seventeen miles. They turned loose a fine dog, Neptune, because he was too fat, and another, Peary, because he was incapacitated. In the first four days they covered ninety-four miles. The sledges bore sledge metres which measured the distance covered very effectively.

After 80 S. they erected snow-beacons about six feet high every nine kilometres, or one hundred and fifty in all. These snow-beacons were invaluable guides to them on their return. From 80 to 84 S. they made an average of seventeen miles per day. Between 84 and 88 S. they sometimes made as much as twenty-three miles a day even in thick fog. Yet they were in constant danger of crevasses and had many narrow escapes. Travel was aided by their skis. They coasted rapidly many miles per day behind the sledges.



On this part of the journey they were constantly rising. At 84 S. they had reached a height of 4,550 feet. Soon they had arrived at the alpine height of 10,920 feet. In one day they made nineteen and one-fourth miles with an ascent of 5,750 feet. This extraordinary achievement shows what can be done with well-trained dogs.

It was at this point,  $85^{\circ} 36'$ , that they sacrificed twenty-four of their dogs. Amundsen almost weeps over his brave helpers. This slaughter was absolutely necessary. They had left behind the last depot at 84 S. They could not feed all these dogs, and, furthermore, the time had now come when they had to eat dog themselves. Some of them had declared they would not come to this, but when it came to the test, all had grown so weary of stale food, such as pemmican, biscuits, and chocolate, that they were eager for what Amundsen calls frankly dog cutlets. With the slaughtered dogs, they filled depot number eight. They now reduced the number of sledges to three.

We have to read Amundsen's narrative closely to appreciate the tremendous trial that they went through in these days. The explorer takes it all cheerfully and belittles the difficulties. Yet it is fearful when men are constantly falling from fatigue, when even dogs are dropping and dying because their lungs cannot take in enough air to nourish them, when noses and feet are freezing every few minutes, when one's face is covered with abscesses and great frost-sores of terrible appearance. Yet we do not get the same impression of physical suffering that we get from Peary's narrative.

It was in this vast plateau that on December 14, 1911, they attained the Pole. By dead reckoning their latitude was  $89^{\circ} 53'$ . When they caught the sun next day their calculation showed  $89^{\circ} 56'$ . In order to make sure that he had reached the Pole Amundsen encircled the camp with a radius of about twelve and one-half miles. That is, three men went out in three different directions, two at right angles to the course they had been steering and one in the same course. When their observations were later checked up in Norway by astronomers it was found that they could not have failed to come within a few hundred feet of the actual South Pole.

Amundsen found no new conditions at the Pole. It was the same vast plain of ice and snow. He remained there about three days in all, leaving on December 17th. He set up a little tent with a flag pole about thirteen feet high, well secured with guy-ropes on all sides. Inside he left letters addressed to the King of Norway and to Captain Scott who he assumed would be the first to find the tent. And it was so. The ill-fated Scott arrived there exactly one month later.

The remainder of Amundsen's history describes his meeting with members of the Japanese expedition—who impressed the Norwegians with nothing more than their fearful cruelty to seals—the return to civilization at Hobart, Australia, and the final breaking up of the party. I believe they did not lose a single man on the expedition.

The story of the discovery of the South Pole is followed by a description of the eastern sledge journey by Lieutenant Prestud, and a description of the voyage of the "*Fram*", while Amundsen was in winter quarters and on his way to the Pole, by Captain Nilsen.

The writer had the pleasure of meeting Roald Amundsen on June 25, 1913, at Portland, Maine. The explorer's visit was made a memorable celebration, as Portland is also the home of Rear Admiral Peary. A small, slight man of fifty-odd, wiry and alert in movement, with an unusually large nose, a genial smile, a deprecating manner, saying always "we". Such is the impression we get. Perhaps his personality will gain him far more applause than came to our American discoverer of the North Pole.

Amundsen will soon be far on his journey across the north polar basin. This he regards as his "main expedition". Starting from Behring Strait, Nansen so tells us, he will drift across the Pole with the movement of the ice. He will be five years in the ice and frost and darkness of the North. "It seems almost superhuman," says Nansen, "but he is the man for that, too. '*Fram*' is his ship, 'forward' (*fram*) is his motto, and he will come through."

BERT EDWARD YOUNG.

Vanderbilt University.

## BOOK REVIEWS

VIRGINIA. By Ellen Glasgow. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company.

Miss Glasgow's latest novel, as the symbolism of its title suggests, is a picture of the ideals of a whole people reflected in one woman's life. It is a gloomy picture, as most of her portraits of life in Virginia are, and opinions will vary greatly as to its justice. Notwithstanding that, the power of the book is undeniable. That the author herself is a Virginian and lays her scene in a definite city and at a specified date,—challenging by a hundred touches of careful description of locality and minute analysis of custom, the sharp criticism of her fellow Virginians,—may not be important to the mere novel reader, but must give the book an unusual historical value. For quite apart from the literary distinction of the novel, it contains that rare and valuable thing which Miss Glasgow has offered before; it is a true, but never so convincingly a serious, criticism of the South from the inside.

Of laudation from within—of what the author calls “the endless worship of a single moment in history”—and of indiscriminate condemnation from without, the South has had more than enough, while the benefits of honest self-criticism, like this, are just beginning. Under such circumstances, it is natural that the early examples of this criticism, such as “Nicholas Worth” and the present book, should err on the side of severity. Indeed, Miss Glasgow's novel, which is a most important contribution to the vigorous feminist movement now in progress in the South, is less a criticism of the old-fashioned feminine ideals in Virginia than an indictment of them, an indictment that will seem to conservative people harsh, sweeping, and bitterly unjust. To those Southerners, on the contrary, who hope for radical change, the book is to be recommended as one of startling modernness and extraordinary timeliness in this year of the restoration of the South in national authority after fifty years of exclusion.

The scene is laid in Petersburg and opens in 1884 with the

marriage of Virginia Pendleton at the age of twenty, ending with her separation from her husband twenty-five years later. The book is not for those comfortable souls who rank books with eatables and reject any novel with a sad ending. Those people also should avoid it who identify criticism of one's home with treason against it; like Miss Priscilla Batte, the principal of the Dinwiddie Academy for young ladies, who "clung passionately to the habits of her ancestors under the impression that she was clinging to their ideals." Virginia Pendleton at middle age, through no fault of her own, finds her life ruined because those very "ideals of southern womanhood" held up to her in the system of training of which she is the exquisite embodiment, have dried up the fountains of her usefulness and withered her life by enervating her intelligence. In the face of changes all around her, she can only cling to the once all-sufficient ideal of the self-sacrificing and indulgent wife and mother. Her husband is more deeply interested in his work as playwright than in his children, but when Virginia is confronted by the danger of losing him through her inability to share his interests, she finds herself betrayed at every hand instead of supported and stimulated by the principles of her education. What these principles are is the theme of the first two chapters. With them stands or falls the whole book; for accepted,—as the present writer would accept them,—as essentially just, these two brilliantly written chapters draw after them the whole book as a premise draws its conclusion. Certainly the reader's opinion of the naturalness and truth of the catastrophe will depend upon his view of the justice of this description of Virginia Pendleton's education:—

"To go through life perpetually submitting her opinions was, in the eyes of Virginia's parents and her teacher, the divinely appointed task of woman. Her education was founded on the simple theory that the less a girl knew about life the better prepared she would be to contend with it. Knowledge of any sort (except the rudiments of reading and writing, the geography of countries she would never visit and the dates of battles she would never mention) was kept as rigorously from her as if it contained the germ of a contagious disease. . . . The chief object of her upbringing, which differed in no essential particular

from that of every other well-born and well-bred southern woman of her day, was to paralyze her reasoning faculties so completely that all danger of mental 'unsettling' or even movement was eliminated from her future. . . . When the child ceased to wonder before the veil of appearances, the battle of orthodoxy with speculation was over, and Miss Priscilla felt that she could rest on her victory.

"Both Virginia's parents cherished the naïve conviction that to acknowledge an evil is in a manner to countenance it, and both clung fervently to the belief that a pretty sham has a more intimate relation with morality than has an ugly truth. . . . To 'take a true view' was to believe what was pleasant against what was painful in spite of evidence; to grant honesty to all men (with the possible exception of the Yankee army and a few local scalawags known as Readjusters); to deny virtue to no woman, not even to the New England Abolitionist; to regard the period before the war in Virginia as attained perfection, and the present as falling short of that perfection only inasmuch as it had occurred since the surrender. . . . Not progress, but a return to the 'ideals of our ancestors' was her father's sole hope for the future; and in Virginia's childhood she had grown to regard this phrase as second in reverence only to that other familiar invocation: 'If it be the will of God.'"

Against such a background, sketched with infinite loving detail, the character of the heroine, her parents, her husband and children, and her friends, all stand out with the clearness of life. Compared with these perfectly real people, the characters of Miss Glasgow's former novels are book-figures. Some readers may find the first chapters overloaded with analysis of character, and too sparing in the delineation of character through dialogue. The last two-thirds of the book, however, grow steadily in power as the story is unrolled of a good woman's married life and its gradual wreck. Here every trait of character brought out in the earlier chapters, every weakness fostered and cultivated by Virginia's false and superficial education, is shown working out to its irresistible conclusion. In the last chapters the sociology and history, the didacticism and bitterness fall away, and the reader loses himself, because the writer lost herself before him



in the pitifulness of one poor human life. If tragic power is truly measured by its effect in purging with pity and terror, Miss Glasgow has written in *Virginia* a noble tragedy.

LEWIS PARKE CHAMBERLAYNE.

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THE INSIDE OF THE CUP. By Winston Churchill. New York: The Macmillan Company.

A thought-compelling, aggressive arraignment of the modern Church, and in many ways a tremendous book, but no novel, must in general be the criticism after reading Mr. Churchill's latest volume, *The Inside of the Cup*. That it is sincere to the core, that it is constructive, that it is told by a writer of assured ability, goes without saying. To one especially interested in the problems involved, it may even have an interest of gripping force. But these good points do not make the characters live or change theological arguments into natural conversations.

The plot, such as there is, revolves around the figure of John Hodder, an Episcopal clergyman of extreme orthodoxy, who after ten years in a small New England community is called to be rector of St. John's, a fashionable down-town church in the Middle West. The book then takes up the problems the new minister meets for the first time and how he solves them. Eldon Parr, the local millionaire of questionable honesty when judged by more than business standards, is the new rector's first stumbling-block. None of the poorer class will so much as enter St. John's while this man, who robbed them of their savings and who profits from their temptations, is the chief layman. The divorce question, modern Biblical criticism, the life of the idle rich, are also brought to Hodder for solution—a situation he cannot meet with his old-fashioned theology. The expected crisis comes when he actually tries to help some of the unfortunates around the church, and learns why they distrust him. The result is not abandonment of the rectorship, but a revision of his beliefs and church-roll. Then, supported by the Bishop, he turns his Episcopal Church into a true Christian House of God.

With such material it is a matter of regret that Mr. Churchill

did not take more pains to make his present characters live, as Jethro Bass and Richard Carvel have done. In fact, many of the minor personages like Horace Bentley and Mr. Langmaid are much more alive than Hodder, who is often a mere mouth-piece for the author. Even the love affair between the rector and Parr's daughter is too full of preachings on both sides to be artistic, much less romantic. In this respect the book is a distinct second to *Robert Elsmere*, its immediate prototype.

We may quarrel with Mr. Churchill's views and we may feel dissatisfied with the book's failure to fulfil some of the essentials of the novelist's art, but we must admire the first attempt to adequately reflect the religious unrest of our decade in a book which rings true as a sincere attempt to make Christianity Christian and finds a refuge neither Unitarian nor Socialistic.

W. S. RUSK.

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V. V.'S EYES. By Henry Sydnor Harrison. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

As one critic puts it, Mr. Harrison's *V. V.'s Eyes* is "unique among contemporary novels in that it is alive to its fingertips,—pricked anywhere, it bleeds." And this expresses felicitously what everyone will feel when he reads this new book by the author of *Queed*,—a novel which realizes the wishes booklovers had at Mr. Harrison's début two years ago. It is the sort of book that makes one feel happier and nobler for having read it. And what gives still more cause for rejoicing, the present volume is not only as good as its predecessor but a distinct advance both in technique and interest.

Wisely taking as his title, *V. V.'s Eyes*, the author has traced inimitably the change a Southern belle's ideals undergo when she comes in contact with Dr. Vivian, the slum doctor, who is more concerned with the preservation of her soul than with her beauty. Guided by her "Mama", Cally Heth is fast rushing into a marriage with a millionaire lawyer of New York's Four Hundred, when "V. V." appears and by his whimsical, child-like gaze and his gentle optimism begins the regeneration of this social butterfly. It is just here that the author has shown

most brilliantly his skill in delineating character. Though the entire book is taken up with the transformation, the changes are so subtly drawn that there is not a single break in the psychological transition. The reader is swept along with no thought save that the characters are as real as life itself.

There are such a host of scenes and episodes that charm or thrill, it is almost impossible to speak in restrained terms. The meetings between Cally and the Doctor, for instance, are always tense with interest,—he, an idealist of the gentlest sort, and she, "the loveliest of the Huns". It is another of the author's triumphs that he stops short of exaggeration and sentimentalism, thus leaving two of the most beautiful figures of recent fiction real yet ideal.

The tragic ending of the book is saved from a slight melodramatic atmosphere only by the native skill of the author, and forms, perhaps, the one unfortunate feature of the story. It is an artistic success, however, and gives a chance for a final comment on the Doctor's life. "If he was much loved, it was because he loved much."

W. S. RUSK.

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NEW LEAF MILLS. By William Dean Howells. New York: Harper & Brothers.

This latest novelette by the Dean of American Letters is a delightful picture of pioneer life in the Middle West shortly after the Mexican War. Mr. Howells has lost none of his peculiar skill in portraying character and events, making the most commonplace facts interesting and important. The vividness and clear-cut descriptions of frontier life stamp the volume as more than a book of the hour. Future historians may well gather "local color" from its pages. Whether the author is writing of his own experiences as a boy or not, his portraiture is of the most realistic type. The central figure, Owen Powell, is a dreamer of the better sort who after failure in the city tries cheerfully to found a "model community" in the woods. When after many misfortunes he is forced back to the town he begins a new venture with unabated enthusiasm. While there is no attempt made to develop any of the characters, the psy-

chology of such a mind as Powell's is unusually well drawn. To the jaded novel-reader this "chronicle" will prove delightfully refreshing.

W. S. R.

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THE DAFFODIL FIELDS. By John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Company.

To take the theme of *Enoch Arden* and write a masterpiece, to out-Tennyson Tennyson and withal lose none of one's originality and peculiar virility, is the feat accomplished by John Masefield in his latest published volume, *The Daffodil Fields*. In spite of the wonderful description of the sea in the *Story of a Round-House*, there was much crudity in both form and substance. And while it drew forth unstinted praise in some quarters, there was an equally important section of the reading public who said conservatively that England would never be content with such plain speech which was neither poetry nor elegant prose. Many of these mannerisms have been refined away in the present volume, however, though all the strength and out-door ruggedness has been retained. A spade is still called a spade, but no longer a "manure shovel". The author is still a realist, but no longer of the Zola company.

Mr. Masefield also shows in this latest poem that he is as much at home on land as on sea. His descriptions of the English country with its daffodil fields and the South American pampas are real poetry of the highest calibre. When a few rough places have been smoothed out in future editions—jolts caused by the difficult metre employed, the alternate rhymed quatrain—the poem may well stand beside the best yet produced in the English tongue.

W. S. R.

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THE VICTORY. By Annah Robinson Watson. Memphis, Tennessee: Foster Printing and Publishing Company.

*The Victory*—sumptuously printed, bound, illustrated—is a collection of fourteen lyric poems, varying in length from four to one hundred and seventy-one lines and almost equally varied in rhythm and metre. Its theme covers the work of God "from

chaos to completion," involving as it does "the victory of Good over Evil, of Love over Hate, of Life over Death," its aim is to present a fuller vision of the supereminent conception and purpose of the Almighty. For poetry so exalted in spirit a less ornate format would perhaps have been more fitting; besides, the lyric tone and the choice and change of rhythm and metre often seem inappropriate or ineffective. As for the theme, it makes inevitable a comparison with the Miltonic epic which the reader must forget in order to do justice to Mrs. Watson's work. Judged by its purpose, *The Victory* is successful; it does make fuller one's vision of the divine plan of redemption—though the presentation of the plan here is somewhat fragmentary. Judged as poetry, it is well worth reading because of its general aptness of phrase, the prevailing harmonious dignity of its style, and its genuinely poetic qualities of thought, feeling, and imagination.

C. M. NEWMAN.

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ALMS FOR OBLIVION. By Pegram Dargan. New Orleans: Printed for the Author by L. Graham Co., Ltd.

Fashions in verse come and go. At the present time the prevailing styles exhibited in the magazines are those set by Keats, Browning, and Emily Dickinson. One might have supposed that the once universal Byronic model had gone never to return. Yet in *Alms for Oblivion* we find a volume, nearly four hundred pages long, in which the opening poem is modeled on "Don Juan" and the succeeding satires owe their inspiration to "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Here are the Byronic cynicism and coarseness, the personal invective and personal egotism, both in the poems and the notes appended to them. Less apparent is Byron's titantic quality of power and passion, his wit and his compelling personality.

Frankly speaking, this volume is a disappointment to a reviewer who shares many of the author's prejudices and thinks them excellently adapted to head a well-feathered satiric shaft. But Mr. Dargan's shaft is so poorly feathered as rather to suggest that proverbial Australian weapon which returns upon him who casts it. As a matter of fact, American literature is, at the



present time, in many instances the victim of æmia and emasculation. Its promised land threatens to flow less with milk and honey than with milk and water. A Southern writer who could revive the virile realism and satire of Byron and something of that eighteenth century severity of rationalism which has in the past marked certain aspects of Southern culture, might work some splendid mischief among the many mild contemporary echoers of the larger utterance of the earlier gods of romanticism and transcendentalism. But to do this it would be necessary, among other things, to show a fair knowledge of the primary craftsmanship of a writer of verse.

Byron often wrote bad rhyme and bad rhythm, and declared he would rather err with Pope than shine with Pye, but Mr. Dargan's errors are not those that Pope, or even Byron, would ever share. Sometimes for example, his decasyllables are a foot too short; as,—

Tell him the Muse Americana;

sometimes a foot too long; as,—

To fear—the small Columbus of his little class.

The following assonances, in the place of rhymes, occur, with many others in one poem:—spur, rear; rogue, dog; honors, owners; delves, calves; are, there; gods, woods; yet, gate; neighed, fled.

It may seem futile to note such obvious errors, but it is done with a purpose. Most of Mr. Dargan's satire is directed against the alleged unfairness of Northern critics of Southern culture and literature. The reviewer, a man of wholly Southern extraction, protests that a work with such glaring faults should be regarded as typical of the South. At the end of the volume are some five pages of errata. The *naïveté* of some of the notes is astonishing. We are told, for example, that Christoforo Columbo is "the Italian for the great discoverer's name"; and "unto yourself be true" is annotated: "Polonius's advice to his son, see 'Hamlet'". The bad literary manners which allow the author to ridicule the work of writers who have recently died, like Knowles and Moody, is equally amazing. And finally the mingled obscenity and obscurity of some of the specimens

in the section called "Dixie Drolleries" suggests the sort of verse Dean Swift might have written in his dotage.

And yet, when all these disagreeable truths have been said, the fact remains that Mr. Dargan exhibits in the better part of his work considerable reading, spirit, and individuality. He sings to his critics:—

Know then, ye inksters, and such have you placed,  
At once themselves and reason so disgraced,  
We dare your scorn; unto the combat come—  
Behold! a Rebel that dares beat the drum.

The inkster who writes this review cannot parse the first two lines, but he understands the other two, and wishes the Rebel all success and an improved technique in his chosen instrument. With the horns of elf-land as faintly blowing as they are at present, there is an excellent chance for drum and fife music.

L. WARDLAW MILES.

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O PIONEERS! By Willa Sibert Cather. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

If the great Middle West has ceased to be a field for the novelist in tales of Indian adventure and cowboy daring, it still contains fruitful subjects for the pen of the writer with sympathy and insight who, in the westward movement of the great hordes of foreign immigrants, can discover material as romantic and as historically valuable as that recorded in Cooper's *Prairie* and Irving's *Astoria*. In this romance of the modern West by Miss Cather the author has broken new ground and reveals herself as a writer with insight into character, narrative skill, descriptive power, sense of proportion, and charm of style. In a few briefly and vividly sketched scenes revealed through the eye and heart of one that knows and loves the region, the writer makes us feel the atmosphere of the vast prairie and interprets it to us through its effect on the characters. There is no torturing of words, no forcing of the mood; all is done without conscious effort and with artistic restraint and reserve. The story deals with that medley of Scandinavian, Bohemian, German, and French immigrants who, with no experience in farming, crowded to the

western prairies in the early seventies and sought to wring a livelihood from a reluctant soil. Each racial type is clearly depicted with its special customs and views of life, and the earlier generation is contrasted with the later,—the American in the making. The characters, however, are more than mere types; they are individuals who grow, and whose contrasted temperaments and training lead inevitably to a conflict in which the woman is the victor, triumphing by virtue of her superior common sense, her stronger will, her clearer vision, her greater courage, her firmer faith in the future of the country. Thus subtly the feminist theme is made prominent at the expense of the men, who are all singularly devoid of strength and initiative. As a consequence, the chief point of weakness in the story is that Carl, the lover of Alexandra, notwithstanding his self-abnegation, fails in the end to render himself altogether worthy of such a splendid woman, who in spite of herself has to do most of the wooing.

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SIDNEY LANIER AT ROCKINGHAM SPRINGS. A new chapter in American Letters. By John W. Wayland, Ph.D. Dayton, Va.: The Ruebush-Elkins Company. 1912.

In this little volume Professor Wayland has brought together some interesting facts, not hitherto recorded, about Lanier's visit to Rockingham Springs, near Staunton, Virginia, in the summer of 1879. It was during this summer that Lanier prepared for the press his *Science of English Verse*. Dr. Wayland, with the aid of letters from Mrs. Lanier and the owner of the cottage at which the Laniers stayed, succeeded in making a pretty detailed account of the poet's life at this time. We learn, among other things, about Lanier's habits of composition, his interest in the social life of the neighborhood, his delight in horse-back riding, and his fondness for flute-playing by night. Photographs are given of the room in which the poet wrote and of the Lanier cottage and its environments. A clipping from a local newspaper tells of Lanier's presence at a tournament on August 8, 1879, on which occasion he delivered the charge to the Knights—"an eloquent and appropriate address." The

volume prompts the wish that similar studies of other periods of Lanier's life might be made before those in possession of the facts shall have passed into the beyond. K. C.

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SOUTHERN LITERARY READINGS. Edited with Introduction, Notes, etc. By Leonidas Warren Payne, Jr. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company. 1913. pp. xiv+487.

This is an attractive volume of selections from the chief writers of the South, intended for use in the upper grammar grades and the high school. Altogether, thirty-four Southern writers are represented, of whom nine are still living, three of these—Stark Young, Hilton Ross Greer, and "Larry" Chittenden—being Texans. The most noteworthy omissions (made, presumably, because of copyright restrictions) are Maurice Thompson, Page, and Cable. A biographical sketch accompanies each group of selections; and there are upwards of ninety pages of notes and "thought questions". The notes will doubtless strike some teachers as unnecessarily full and minute, but, as Professor Payne observes in his preface, they may easily be ignored. Both the notes and the biographical sketches appear to be based on the latest and most authoritative sources, and the volume is carefully edited throughout. K. C.

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THE BIRDS OF VIRGINIA. By Harold H. Bailey. Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell Company. \$3 net. Postage 24 cents.

The title of this volume suggests a wider scope than is covered by the text, for, as the title-page and introduction indicate clearly, the book deals with those birds known to breed within the limits of Virginia. One hundred and eighty-five species are treated. The range of each species, its nesting habits, the oölogical details, such as size and number of eggs; their color and markings, are carefully given. There are also many notes on the general habits of the birds, and little touches here and there which show that love of nature and of bird-life is a prominent trait in the author's character. The absence of dry, scientific detail commends the book to the lay-student of birds. Though

here and there the necessity for a little more attention to rhetorical construction is evident, the scientific value of the material and the care and accuracy exhibited in the gathering and compiling of so great a mass of notes will allow such defects to be passed over. The book covers the results of about twenty-four years' field experience in Virginia. The author has studied bird-life also in California and other western states, and in the tropics. The volume is beautifully illustrated with fourteen full-page color drawings, and one hundred and eight excellent half-tones taken from nature, of birds, nesting sites, and general views, made from clear and well-chosen photographs. The printing of the illustrations, the letter-press, binding, and general appearance of the book reflect great credit upon the publishers, and the whole may be considered as a distinct achievement for the South, as well as a valuable and helpful contribution to the study of our Southern bird-life.

ELLISON A. SMYTH, JR.

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THE FREE LIFE. By Woodrow Wilson. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

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## Quarterly

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October, 1913

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London Agency: 39 Paternoster Row, E. C.

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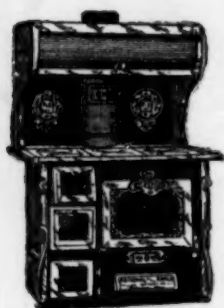
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